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DYNAMICS OF THE FUR TRADE ON THE MIDDLE YUKON RIVER, ALASKA, 1839 TO 1868

A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty

of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Fairbanks, Alaska

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Russian-era fur trade of the middle course of the Yukon River, that section of the river which extends from Fort Yukon down to Nulato, Alaska. For a period of just over twenty years, 1847 to 1868, the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies maintained rival establishments at opposite ends of this stretch of river and vied for the trade of the Native populations living in the region between. After reviewing the events leading up to the establishment of the first European posts in the region, the study focuses on the dynamics of the competition between the rival posts and the changing nature of Native, Russian, and British participation in the middle Yukon trade.

Most historical summaries of the early (pre-1867) fur trade of the Middle Yukon rely upon a small number of published sources, resulting in a truncated and rather inaccurate version of the region's fur trade history. This study seeks to overcome that problem through utilization of two major archival collections, the records of the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies. Together, these sources make possible an account that is more even in temporal coverage and more balanced in its treatment of Russian, British, and Native trade activities.

One of the striking features of the early Yukon drainage fur trade is the pivotal role of the Native traders in determining its spatial patterning. Though regional patterns were characterized by a certain overall stability in the period 1830 through 1868, they also underwent marked change. This study examines those changes with regard to the middle Yukon drainage and discusses the influence of material and social factors upon them.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In this study I examine the Russian-era fur trade of the middle course of the Yukon River, that section of the river which extends from Fort Yukon down to Nulato, Alaska. For a period of just over twenty years, 1847 to 1868, the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies maintained rival establishments at opposite ends of this stretch of river and vied for the trade of the Native populations living in the region between. The study focuses on the dynamics of the competition between the rival posts and the changing nature of Native, Russian, and British participation in the middle Yukon trade.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Studies of the effects of European contact upon Native societies in the North American Subarctic have long focused on the fur trade as the context within which many of the initial contacts occurred and as the primary context of Native-white relations until well into the nineteenth, or even into the twentieth, century. The fur trade literature dealing with subarctic Canada is rich and varied. Two comprehensive histories originally published in the 1930s sketch in broad strokes the spread of the trade across Canada, its basic chronology, and its political and economic setting (Innis 1962; Morton 1973). In the past twenty years these have been extensively supple-

mented by detailed ethnohistorical studies of the effects of the trade upon specific Native groups and by research into such topics as the composition of fur trade society, patterns of Native-white interaction, and the nature of Native participation in the trade (Krech 1994:18-19).

In comparison, study of the fur trade of subarctic Alaska is undeveloped. Though a general chronology of the pre-1867 history of the Alaskan fur trade has been available for more than a century (Bancroft 1886), documentary research is still refining our understanding of the chronology and geographical extent of the trade in much of Alaska's interior. Ethnohistorical studies of Native responses to and participation in the Alaskan fur trade are still few and geographically dispersed. Only in southwestern Alaska have such studies begun to show promise of sufficient overlap to provide a basis for discussions of regional patterns.

Why is there such disparity in the intensity of Canadian and Alaskan fur trade research? In large part it is due to the character of the available data. Ray and Roberts (1985:274) attribute much of the recent increase in Canadian ethnohistorical research to the opening of the Hudson's Bay Company archives to scholars in the late 1960s and transfer of the archives from London, England, to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in 1970. Hudson's Bay Company trading post journals, account books, correspondence files, and other documents have indeed proven to be rich sources of data on topics ranging from weather patterns to Native trading practices. Much of the data is qualitative in nature, but certain categories of documents have been found amenable to quantitative analysis (Ray and Freeman 1978; Jarvenpa and Brumbach 1984).

One very significant quality of this body of records is its continuity over time and space. The Hudson's Bay Company, in existence since 1670, has outlasted a number of competitors in the fur trade and, thanks to the company's long history of centralized administration, many of its records have survived. Records of similar type, some in standardized format, are preserved for present and former Hudson's Bay Company posts at locations throughout Canada and for posts in several areas which

are now part of the United States. Though there are gaps in the materials preserved, many posts are represented by fairly complete series of records. In areas in which a post persisted into the twentieth century, this documentation may even overlap living memory. Such continuity is an obvious advantage both for those reconstructing local histories and ethnographies and for those seeking temporal and spatial patterns in the trade.

The continuity is broken at the Alaska-Canada border, beyond which, with a few notable exceptions, the Hudson's Bay Company did not operate. The fur trade to the west of the border, which has been in roughly its present location since 1825, belonged to the Russian-American Company until 1867 and thereafter was the province of various American traders. Of the day-to-day business papers of the Russian-American Company, only a portion of the correspondence files has survived. While detailed data on the operations of individual posts are lacking, these records do contain information on a wide variety of topics concerning company policies and problems and regional development of the trade. Yet even these topics have not been fully explored, for the fact that the records are written in Russian longhand renders them inaccessible to many who might use them to advantage.

Records of most of the American firms that traded in Alaska after 1867 have been dispersed or lost. Only the Alaska Commercial Company, whose founders purchased the Russian-American Company's Alaskan assets, is represented by a significant amount of documentary material. These records, which cover the period from the late 1860s to the 1910s, include account books, correspondence files, and post journals from south-central and part of southwestern Alaska and miscellaneous papers from western Alaska. Though an increasing number of archaeologists are finding the records a useful source of data on historic sites and trade good inventories, the records as a whole have been considered too incomplete and too limited in geographic coverage and time depth to warrant detailed analysis in their own right (Oswalt 1967).

If it is an increase in the volume and accessibility of data that will promote

study of the Alaskan fur trade, recent developments augur well for the future of such research. Through the efforts of The Limestone Press, the Oregon Historical Society, and others, the availability of English translations of Russian- and German-language sources dealing with the early Alaskan fur trade has increased significantly over the past two decades, and additional titles are being released every year. Within the past sixteen years, two major collections of Russian manuscript material dealing with the activities of the Alaskan Russian Orthodox Church have been microfilmed, indexed, and made available for research (Smith 1980; Shalkop 1984). The records of individual parishes, which are most complete for the period 1830 through about 1915, preserve many types of social and demographic data on both Natives and non-Natives at a level of detail not found in the surviving commercial records. For those localities and time periods in which missions were in operation, the Russian Orthodox Church records will prove to be much more valuable than those of the Russian and American trading firms as a source of ethnohistorical and ethnographic information.

While there is scant hope that significant caches of Russian documents relating to the Alaskan fur trade will yet be discovered outside the former Soviet Union, Russian scholars continue to search their own archives for relevant material. Manuscript materials transcribed, annotated, and published by Russian scholars in recent years fall primarily into the categories of journals of exploration and information on operations of the Russian-American Company in the first few decades of its existence. With Russian archives increasingly open to foreign scholars, collaborative efforts in this direction are also now expanding.

Although these advances in documentation pertain most directly to the Russian period of the Alaskan fur trade, it may be hoped that they will encourage the study of later periods as well. Just as recent studies of modern subsistence trapping in Alaska have reawakened research interest in the earlier trapping industry (Schneider 1980; Fall 1981), so will a better understanding of the early history of the Alaskan fur trade make more apparent, and illuminate the significance of, the continuities and discontinuities in its subsequent development.

STUDY CONTEXT

Different though Alaska's fur trade history is from that of Canada, its study cannot be pursued in isolation. At a 1971 conference on Northern Athabaskan research, June Helm and her students ambitiously undertook to identify common threads, "major trends and transformations," in the contact experience of subarctic Athabaskans (Helm et al. 1975:304-305). They proposed a generalized, three-stage chronological framework to facilitate cross-cultural comparisons of Native post-contact histories throughout the Subarctic. Recognizing differences between the experiences of Athabaskans living east and west of the Cordillera, they urged intensive documentary research to test the usefulness and adequacy of this framework for understanding post-contact developments among the western, predominantly Alaskan, groups (Helm et al. 1975:322). In the ensuing years there has been insufficient research along these lines to determine whether the framework is, in fact, useful with reference to the majority of Alaskan Athabaskans.

Meanwhile, those investigating the post-contact experiences of Canadian Athabaskans and Algonquians have amassed sufficient data to argue for refinement of the chronological framework to include five, or even seven, stages, the better to characterize the gradations of change in Native societies in the post-contact period (Bishop and Ray 1976:134; Krech 1984:xvi). For lack of comparative data, Alaskan Athabaskans and other Natives of subarctic Alaska seem to have fallen out of consideration in discussions of such chronological frameworks, and there is a danger that what began as a tool for generalization across the North American Subarctic will evolve into a framework too specific to be of utility beyond the borders of Canada.

The best way in which to bring the post-contact developments among Alaskan Native groups back into consideration is to undertake ethnohistorical research parallel to that accomplished in Canada in recent years. The Canadian ethnohistorical literature of the past two decades suggests many topics to be investigated as well as innovative approaches to archival, ethnographic, and archaeological data that might be adapted for use in Alaskan research. The post-contact experiences of Alaskan Natives

may indeed prove to be too different from those of the Natives of Canada to be meaningfully incorporated into a single series of stages. To be in a position to make such a determination, however, we must accumulate a body of comparative data sufficient to identify and to seek to explain the most significant points of difference. In this manner, we will advance our understanding of cultural contact and change in the Subarctic as a whole.

From the perspective of all that remains to be done in Alaskan fur trade research, the present study is modest in scope. Confined as it is to several decades of the fur trade history of a relatively small geographic area, it seeks neither to define stages in post-contact Native history nor to generalize about the nature of Alaskan Native participation in the fur trade. Rather, it is intended as a contribution to the intensive documentary research upon which such generalizations must ultimately rest.

The study area, the middle course of the Yukon River, stretches from Fort Yukon down to Nulato, Alaska. It is distinguished as one of the few geographic areas in which the fur trade of Alaska and Canada overlapped. For a brief period, 1847 to 1868, the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies maintained rival establishments at opposite ends of this section of the river and sought to attract the trade of the Athabaskan peoples living in the territory between. The dynamics of the competition between the rival posts, and of Native, Russian, and British participation in the region's trade, are the focus of this study.

The Study Area

The Yukon River, which has its origin in the Yukon Territory of Canada, cuts across the entire breadth of Alaska to empty into the Bering Sea. Along with its tributaries, it drains most of Alaska's interior, the region lying between the Alaska and Brooks ranges of mountains, and from prehistoric times has constituted an important transportation and communication artery.

The Yukon does not flow due west across Alaska but, much to the confusion of some of its early European explorers, changes direction dramatically at several

points along its great length. From its headwaters to Fort Yukon, Alaska, the river flows roughly northwest. From a great bend in the river at Fort Yukon to an even sharper bend just above Nulato, the river's course runs west-southwest. Below Nulato the river flows south-southwest as far as Holy Cross, then turns west and finally north before reaching the sea (Figure 1).

The section of the river between Fort Yukon and Nulato is here designated the Middle Yukon (Figure 2). It is along this segment that the Yukon River receives its largest tributaries: the Porcupine, which enters from the northeast near Fort Yukon, the Koyukuk, which enters from the north just above Nulato, and, midway between them, the Tanana, which joins the Yukon from the southeast. Fort Yukon lies in the midst of the Yukon Flats, a broad, swampy lowland that is a labyrinth of sloughs and streams interspersed with innumerable lakes. Just below present-day Stevens Village, some 160 miles below Fort Yukon by the meanderings of the river, the flats disappear as the river enters a gorge. For more than a hundred miles the Yukon follows a tortuous course through a narrow, steep-sided valley, a physiographic feature designated the Rampart Trough (Wahrhaftig 1965:25). About fifty miles upstream from its confluence with the Tanana, it enters a particularly constricted twenty-mile segment of the valley, known as the Rampart Gorge or simply "The Ramparts." Below the gorge the Yukon flows through a broad valley, bordered by low, rolling hills, which continues to Nulato and beyond.

The predominant vegetation of the Middle Yukon and its tributaries is boreal forest, with patches of tundra at higher elevations. Moose are the predominant big game of the river bottomlands, while caribou are found in the northern hills. The rivers yield several species of whitefish as well as chum, king, and silver salmon, and migratory waterfowl are seasonally abundant, especially on the Yukon Flats.

It was the region's potential for large yields of valuable fur bearers, however, that first attracted Russian and British traders. Most of the Yukon drainage is prime habitat for beaver, a species of major interest to the Russians when they initiated their expansion into the area. Martens, which increased in commercial importance follow-

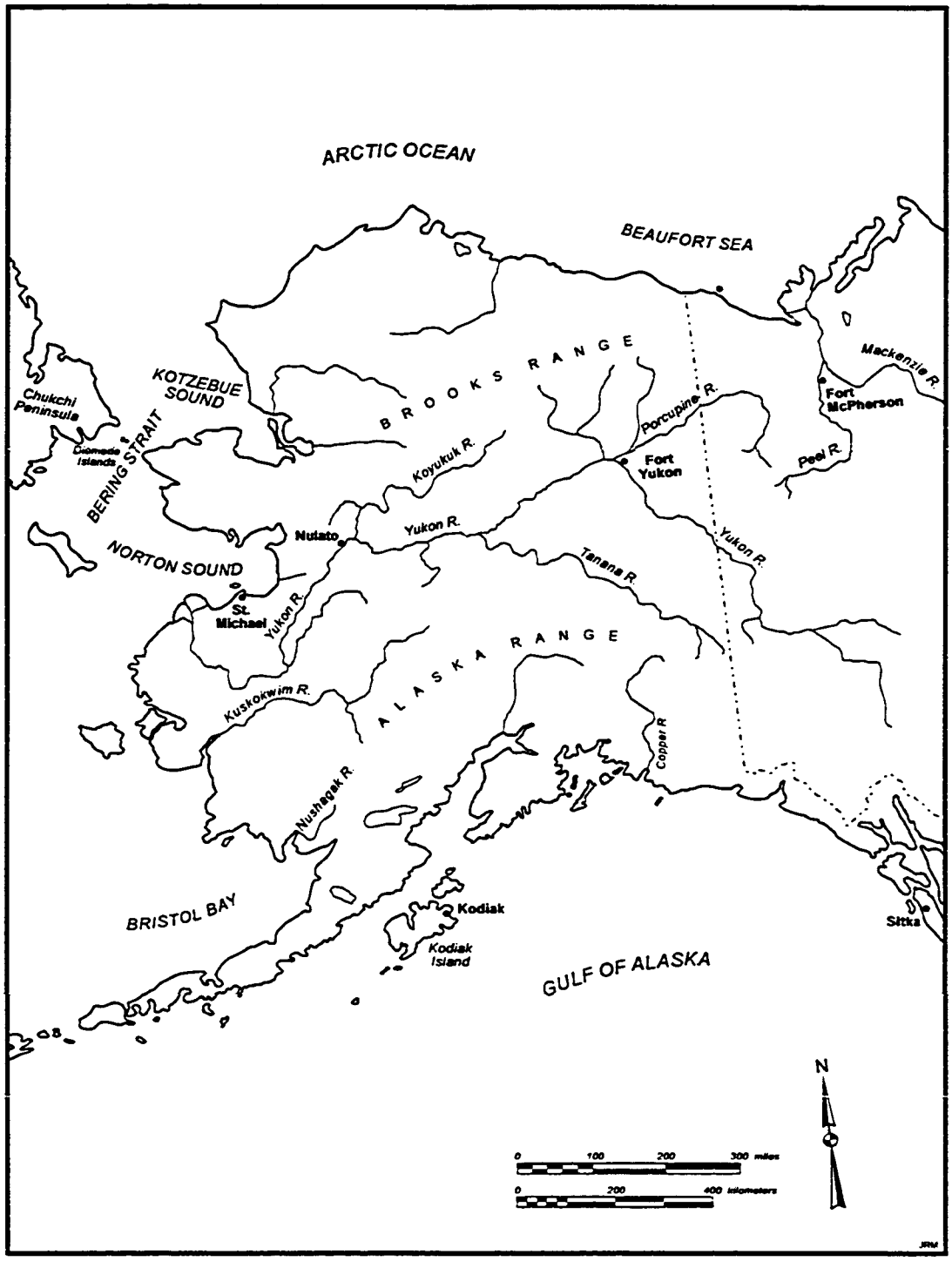

Figure 1. Map of Alaska.

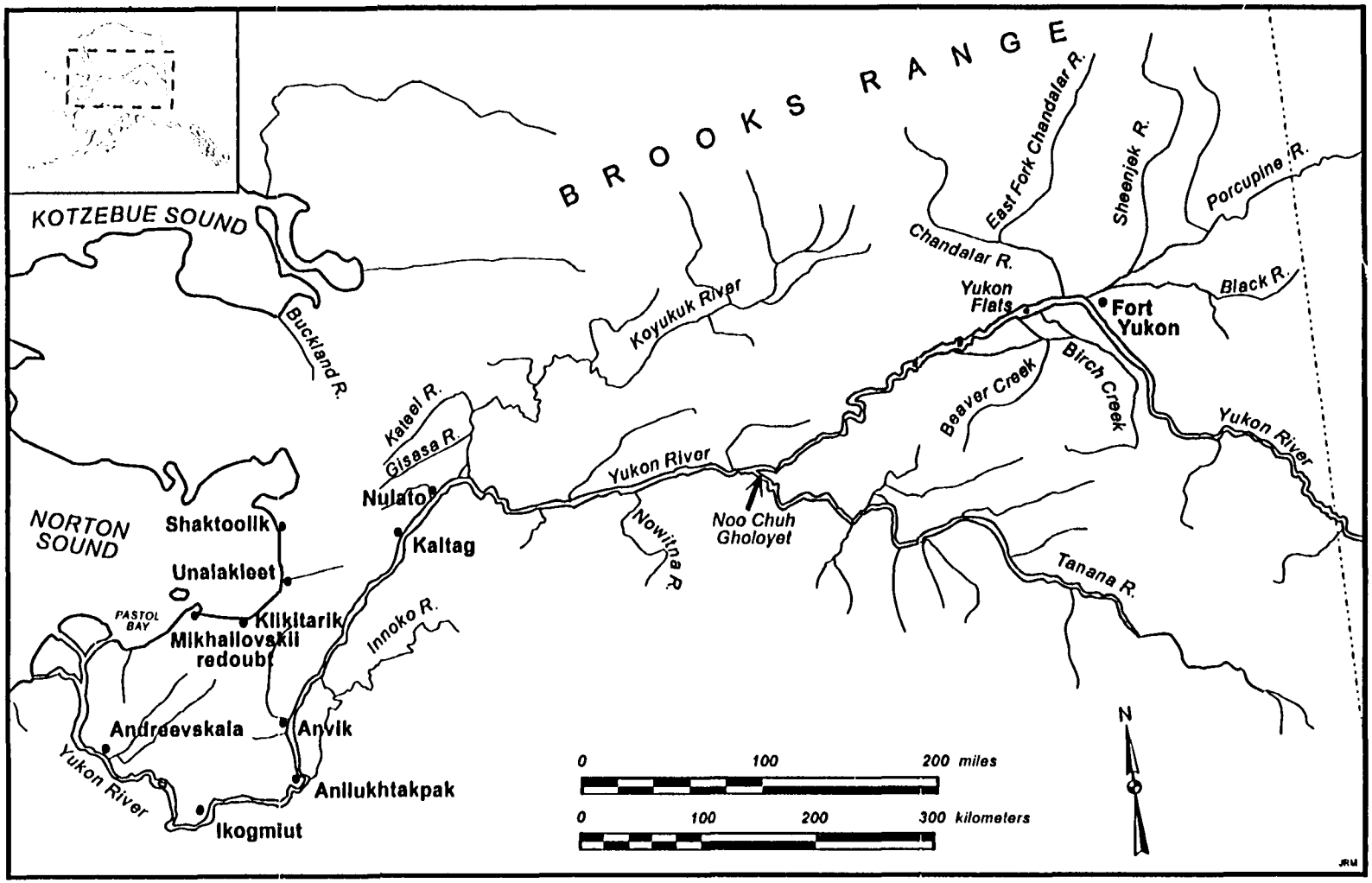

Figure 2. The study area. Shaded portion indicates the extent of the Yukon Flats.

ing the collapse of beaver prices in major markets in the mid 1840s, are less evenly distributed. Though good to excellent marten habitat occurs in forested hilly country throughout the region, this species is known to be very mobile and will virtually abandon an area for years on end. Of the other fur bearers most desired by the traders, land otter find especially favorable habitat in the Yukon Flats, the Yukon floodplain downstream of the Yukon-Tanana confluence, and the Innoko and Koyukuk drainages. Red foxes, in their various color phases, are found throughout the region, but the lowland areas downstream of the Yukon-Tanana confluence are known as particularly prime habitat (ADFG 1978:47-59; Nelson 1973:218-219).

The Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies established posts on the Middle Yukon in 1839 and 1847, respectively. The European traders found the region to be inhabited by Koyukon and Kutchin (Gwich'in) Athabaskans, hunters and fishermen whose subsistence activities extended up the drainages of the Yukon's many tributaries as well as along the Yukon itself. The Koyukon and Kutchin were already involved in the fur trade when the foreigners arrived, some local groups more intensively than others. The Russians at Nulato found the neighboring Koyukon to be important links in a long-standing coast-interior trade that funneled interior products, primarily furs, to the coastal Eskimos (and thence to the Chukchi Peninsula across Bering Strait) in exchange for marine products and European manufactured goods. When the British arrived on the Yukon, they in turn found that local Kutchin had trade links to the west as well as to the east and had been receiving manufactured goods from both directions in exchange for furs. Both Russians and British hoped to intercept the preexisting trade in furs, but were to learn that trade relations of the Natives among themselves and with outsiders were neither static nor readily controlled.

Study Objectives and Approach

The objectives of this study are three. First, it is intended as an account of Russian and British trading activities on the Middle Yukon. Second, it examines the

course of Russian-British competition in the region and Native responses to it. Finally, it compares the operations, under similar conditions, of two great trading firms, the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies.

Compiling an Account

Most historical summaries of the early (pre-1867) fur trade of the Middle Yukon rely heavily upon a very small number of published sources. Information on Russian activities is most frequently drawn from the travel notes of Lavrentii Zagoskin (1956b, 1967), who explored a portion of the region in 1843, and the observations of various members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, especially those of William Healey Dall (1870), who spent the years 1866 to 1868 along the Yukon. Hudson's Bay Company activities are known primarily from the 1847-48 journal of Alexander Murray (1910), which covers the first year of operations at Fort Yukon, and, again, the publications of such members of the Telegraph Expedition as Dall and Frederick Whymper (1868a, 1868b). These sources provide glimpses of the beginnings of Russian and British operations on the Middle Yukon in the 1840s and of the state of those operations in the mid 1860s, near the end of Russian and British tenure in the region, but are uninformative regarding development of the trade in the intervening years. The result is a truncated and somewhat inaccurate version of the region's fur trade history.

The present study seeks to overcome this problem through two important archival collections, the records of the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies. Not only do the firms' surviving records make it possible to trace the trade's development over time, but they supplement and help us to interpret the information available from other sources regarding the initial and final years of the trade.

While use of these records in studies of the Yukon trade is rare, it is not unprecedented. In his ethnohistorical study of the Ingalik, an Athabaskan group residing considerably downriver of the present study area, James VanStone drew upon a small body of Russian-American Company correspondence for data on early

exploration of the lower Yukon, Russian trading practices in western Alaska, and other topics (VanStone 1979:43-103). Lydia Black's recent study of Russian influences among the Central Yup'ik relies in part upon Russian-American Company documents, as does some of the contextual material appended to her translation of Father Iakov Netsvetov's journals of his work on the lower Yukon (Black 1984; Netsvetov 1984). Catharine McClellan (1950) incorporated data from the Fort Yukon journals into her early study of Native trade in southern Yukon Territory, but since that time few have cited the Hudson's Bay Company records which pertain to the Yukon River. Only recently has Canadian historian Kenneth Coates presented the results of an intensive analysis of the Fort Yukon journals, accounts, and correspondence in his study of trade relations between the Hudson's Bay Company and Natives of the Yukon River basin (Coates 1980, 1982). Of the authors who have made use of the Yukon records of the Russian and British firms, it is Coates who has focused most closely upon the trade of the Middle Yukon. Even his account of the region's early fur trade is not as complete as it might be, however, for it is based upon the records of only one of the European companies involved.

The present study is based upon extensive research among the Russian records of the Yukon trade, the lesser known body of data, supplemented by more selective research among the British records. The Russian-American Company records, the principal source of information on Russian activities, consist of correspondence subdivided into categories of "Communications Sent" (from the colonial capital at Novo-Arkhangel'sk [Sitka]) and "Communications Received" (from the administrative offices in St. Petersburg) and arranged chronologically, but otherwise essentially unindexed. I scanned the Communications Sent for the years 1830 through 1867 item by item for references to the Yukon River (Kvikhpak), St. Michael redoubt and its subordinate posts, and the northern trade in general. I searched the Communications Received for the years 1830 through 1867 and a published calendar of such correspondence for 1817 through 1829 (Fisher 1971) for items referenced in the Communications Sent, and scanned the marginal notations of content of the remaining letters for

references to northern topics. Though specific references to the Middle Yukon are relatively few, it is possible to extract from the company correspondence a general chronology of Russian activities along the river and an overall sense of the regional trade which renders more intelligible the information gleaned from other sources.

The Russian-American Company records also include a manuscript version of Lavrentii Zagoskin's travel notes (1842-44). It is not Zagoskin's original travel log, but a clean copy of his official report of his expedition's activities. In comparing it with the authoritative annotated edition (1956b), I found that in some sections remarks were omitted from the published version, while in other sections remarks were added. In still other cases, passages that at first glance appear to have been omitted from the published version, have merely been repositioned. The close comparative analysis required to cross-check all citations from the published text against the manuscript was beyond the scope of my study. Consequently, in this instance I have relied upon the annotated Russian edition (1956b) and a translation of it (1967).

The Hudson's Bay Company records, the chief source of information on British activities, constitute a much larger and more usefully organized collection. Research focused first upon the post journals and account books of Fort Yukon, which I read in their entirety. Supplemental information was drawn from the correspondence books of Fort Simpson which, as the administrative center for the Mackenzie River district, had jurisdiction over Fort Yukon; I scanned incoming and outgoing correspondence for the years 1846 through 1869 for references to the Yukon trade and to the Russians. Examination of other bodies of correspondence, in which pertinent information is much sparser, was limited to specific items referenced by Coates (1982). The Hudson's Bay Company records yielded a chronology of British activities along the Middle Yukon and a perspective on the region's trade which complements that obtained from Russian records. Together, these sources make possible a historical narrative that is both more even in temporal coverage and more balanced and complete in its treatment of Russian and British activities than the accounts presently available. This constitutes Chapters 2 through 6 of the present study.

RUSSIAN-BRITISH COMPETITION

Many summaries of Yukon River history mention competition between the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies to purchase furs from the Natives who gathered near the mouth of the Tanana River each spring. Moreover, some authors have suggested that Yukon River Natives deliberately fostered this competition and tried to manipulate it to their own benefit (Coates 1982:66-67; Webb 1985:38, 317 n. 30). The historical evidence upon which such statements are based is thin. Accounts of the competition are apparently drawn from observations made by members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition in 1866 (Whymper 1868a:189, 210; Dall 1870:86-94) and the report of Captain Charles Raymond, United States Army Corps of Engineers, who visited Fort Yukon in 1869 (Raymond 1871:9). Interpretations of the Native role in the trade appear to be based primarily upon various entries in the journal of Alexander Murray (1910) regarding "exaggerated" Native reports of Russian activities on the river. It is therefore not surprising that such assertions of the existence of competition and of the creative role of Natives in the trade are seldom sufficiently specific to enhance our understanding of the competitive trade situation. They tell us nothing of the extent of competition before the 1860s or the forms it took, the ways in which Natives may have manipulated the situation or the effectiveness of their methods. The narrative presented in Chapters 2 through 6 lays the groundwork for a critical discussion of these topics.

Coates (1980) marshals both qualitative and quantitative data from the Fort Yukon records to grapple with some of the same questions. He analyzes post and district financial records to assess changes in the relative importance of the Yukon trade to the Mackenzie River district as a whole. This provides one measure of the effects of competition upon the Yukon trade as well as a basis for understanding district management decisions that affected the Yukon River post. For evidence of the effects of competition upon relations between Natives and the Hudson's Bay Company, Coates turns to annual fur returns, annual orders for trade goods, and notations in post journals and correspondence regarding Native attitudes toward the trade and

the company traders. Coates's analysis conveys a sense of the constraints under which the Yukon River post operated and effectively documents the consequences of competition for the company's trade relations and commercial position in the Yukon River basin over a period of nearly fifty years, 1847-1893. What is missing, however, particularly for the years before 1867, is an adequate sense of what "the competition" was, the constraints under which it operated, and the nature of its relations with the Natives. To address these questions, it is necessary to shift the frame of reference from the Mackenzie River district to the Middle Yukon itself. Both the narrative and discussion sections of the present study do just that.

Like Coates's work on this topic, the present study draws inspiration from an analysis by Ray and Freeman of early Native-European trade relations in eastern Canada, of the competition between early British and French traders there and its effects upon the trading behavior of both Natives and the Hudson's Bay Company (Ray and Freeman 1978). Though the quantitative data available for the present study are insufficient for the types of statistical analysis undertaken by Ray and Freeman, the authors' treatment of the institutions developed to facilitate trade between representatives of Native and European societies, and of the spatial and economic considerations of the parties on both sides of the trade relationship, suggests a useful approach to the qualitative data at hand. Thus, my discussion begins with a sketch of the Native trade networks of the Middle Yukon, so far as they are known, which existed just prior to the establishment of the first European posts in the region, and reviews the major changes in trade patterns which had occurred by 1867. It then turns to consideration of the parties most directly involved in the trade, Russian, British, and Kutchin and Koyukon Athabaskan, to examine the constraints upon and options open to each as its members sought to turn the trade to their own advantage.

COMPARISONS

Comparative studies of the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies, especially in regard to their dealings with Natives, seem essential to an understanding

of similarities and differences in the post-contact experiences of the Natives of subarctic Alaska and Canada, yet there are few such studies. In those instances in which comparisons are made, Russian violence is usually contrasted with British benevolence (e.g., Helm et al. 1975:314). The stereotype of the brutal Russian trader originated in the fierce competition for furs that preceded the Russian-American Company's monopoly of the trade and has been perpetuated by the accounts of several later incidents which have become entrenched in the English-language popular literature. All too rare in the literature are accounts of routine operations at Russian posts and accounts of normal trade and social relations with the Natives which might offer true grounds for comparison.

The present study takes advantage of an unusual opportunity, the opportunity to compare the activities of Russian and British traders within a single small geographic area. Indeed, comparison, both implicit and explicit, is a subtheme which runs throughout the text. At this very localized level of analysis, the similarities between the firms, in problems faced and solutions devised, are much more striking than the differences, but studies of other time periods, other geographic areas, and topics other than trade may yield very different results. It is only through consideration of the results of many such studies that we will be able to undertake a multi-level comparison of the two great monopolies of the early fur trade of the North.

Dates, Names, and Other Considerations

When using primary sources, one inevitably encounters problems in comparing geographic and ethnographic names between sources and in equating them with the names in modern usage. In the present study, even dates are not strictly comparable between sources, for the Russians of this period were following a different calendar than the British and Americans. I have adhered to certain conventions in dealing with these inconsistencies.

In the chapters that follow, all dates cited with reference to Russian activities are according to the Julian (Old Style) calendar, while those pertaining to British and

American activities are according to the Gregorian (New Style) calendar, the one we still use today. Only in sections of the text in which some confusion may arise have I specifically identified dates as Old Style (O.S.) or New Style (N.S.). In the nineteenth century, Julian dates were twelve days behind Gregorian dates. In the Russian American colonies, however, there was only an eleven-day difference because, in the times before recognition of an International Dateline, vessels eastbound from Russia did not drop a day when crossing to Alaska.

The Russians, who first became acquainted with the Yukon through Yup'ik Eskimos, knew the river by its Yup'ik name, "Kvikhpak," while the British knew it by an Athabaskan name which they rendered "Youcon." The Russians were not ignorant of the fact that the river's Athabaskan-speaking inhabitants called it "Yukkhana" or "Yuna" (Zagoskin 1967:295 n. 63), but learned this only after they had established themselves in the region and continued to give precedence to the name "Kvikhpak" in all official correspondence. In keeping with this, I have retained the name "Kvikhpak" in all sections of the text dealing with Russian activities. In sections dealing with British activities or in discussions of the river or region as a whole, I use the modern spelling, "Yukon."

Other place names are rendered as they appear in the original documents, followed in parentheses by the present-day name if such could be determined. Orth (1971) was my principal reference for identifying modern place name equivalents, but this source is not infallible. Instances in which Orth's identification differs from what maps of the period seem to show or from the conclusions of other scholars working in the area are discussed in footnotes. Names extracted from Russian documents are transliterated in the modified Library of Congress style adopted by The Limestone Press. Native names which appear in the text in italics are spelled according to the practical orthographies developed by the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Non-italicized Native names are spelled as they appear in the original documents.

More difficult to deal with are the names of Native socio-territorial groups that

appear in Russian and British documents. I have rendered them as they appear in the original documents, in all their variability of spelling, followed in parentheses by the name for that group as established in the ethnographic literature.[1] My principal reference for the ethnographic names was the *Subarctic* volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians* (Helm 1981), evaluated against the internal evidence of the documents themselves. It was not always possible, of course, to identify a documentary name with an ethnographic one. In those cases, I have provided in parentheses some statement of the group's approximate geographic location, to the extent that such could be determined from the documents. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed discussion of the problems encountered in reconciling documentary names with those found in the ethnographic literature.

[1]An exception is my use of the term "Birch Creek Kutchin." See the entry for "Kootcha-Kootchin" in Appendix 1 for a discussion of problems of definition with regard to this term.

CHAPTER 2

THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY REACHES THE KVIKHPAK

Kvikhpak (*kaigpak*), "big river," was the Yup'ik Eskimo name by which the Russians knew the lower Yukon. At a time when the Russian-American Company was searching for new sources of fur revenues, the Kvikhpak River promised a route deep into Alaska's interior, to places where fur bearers were said to abound. The Russian traders found it difficult to reach the Kvikhpak overland from their posts along the southern shores of Alaska, but, once they had established a base of operations on Norton Sound, they were in a position to explore the river's potential.

This chapter chronicles the Russian-American Company's initial expansion to the shores of the northern Bering Sea and inland to the banks of the lower Yukon River. At its core lies the historical chronology which James VanStone has so painstakingly reconstructed over his many years of research in the region (VanStone 1979:43-61). Incorporated into this framework are new data, drawn primarily from the Russian-American Company records, which help to clarify dates, sequences of events, and the company's motivations as it sought to tap the region's trade.

Background Information

The 1741 voyage of Vitus Bering and Aleksei I. Chirikov from Kamchatka to North America is credited with both the discovery of Alaska and revelation of the new land's potential wealth in furs. The expedition's two vessels made the first recorded landfalls along the south coast of Alaska and thus laid the foundation for Russia's later claims to the region.[2] On the homeward voyage Bering's vessel was wrecked on one

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[2]Russia's claims to sovereignty over Alaska were also based upon an earlier landfall in the vicinity of Cape Prince of Wales, on Bering Strait. It was accomplished by an expedition led by Mikhail S. Gvozdev in the summer of 1732, but received little official attention at the time (Goi'denberg 1984:123-137, 221; Fisher 1977:168-169).

of the Commander Islands, which lie between Kamchatka and the westernmost islands of the Aleutian chain. When the survivors returned to Kamchatka in 1742, they brought the pelts of sea otters taken over the winter, evidence of the rich furs awaiting those who would venture across the sea.[3]

Within a year of the return of Bering's crew, the first of the hunter-traders had set out from Eastern Siberia to tap the new source of furs. Others soon followed. As competition intensified, the hunters ranged ever eastward, through the Aleutian chain to Kodiak Island and the south coast of the Alaskan mainland (Berkh 1974; Makarova 1975; Black and Desson 1986; Desson 1987).

Through diligence, luck, and considerable political maneuvering, one of the many hunting and trading companies engaged in this enterprise finally prevailed over the rest. The successors to the Shelikhov-Golikov Company convinced the government of Emperor Paul I (1796-1801) that a large commercial monopoly, modeled somewhat after the British East India Company and similar entities chartered by the governments of other nations, would best serve the interests of Russia in North America. In 1799 an imperial decree established the Russian-American Company, which had at its core the former Shelikhov firms. Among its several privileges, the new company received sole rights to the resources and trade of Alaska (Okun 1951:35-47; Tikhmenev 1978:40, 48-55).

In the early years of its existence, the Russian-American Company concentrated upon consolidating its position along the southern coast of Alaska. By 1818, however, decreasing hunting returns prompted the company to seek more diversity in its fur take and consequently to resume its expansion into untapped areas, which lay primarily to the west and north. In particular, it turned attention to the mainland

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[3]The Bering/Chirikov voyage of 1741 (part of the Second Kamchatka Expedition) has received considerable scholarly attention. For descriptions of the voyage itself, see Golder (1922-25), Müller (1986:99-128), Steller (1988), and the many references cited in those publications. For an assessment of the motivations behind it, see particularly Fisher (1977). Observance of the voyage's 250th anniversary recently inspired a reexamination of its context and results (see, for example, Frost 1992).

north of Bristol Bay, an area which promised high yields of beaver pelts.

Colonial officials already possessed sufficient information about the region to pique their interest. Company files contained a report by Vasilii[4] Ivanov, whom the Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, a former competitor, had dispatched north from Lake Iliamna to the Kuskokwim River basin and perhaps as far as the Yukon in the early 1790s (Chernenko 1967:9-10, 29-30 n. 41; Davydov 1977:200-202; Fedorova 1973:121; Zagumennyi 1963). As nearly as can be determined from the fragmentary account that has survived, Ivanov reported a large Native population and spoke favorably of the fish, game, and fur resources of the region (Berkh 1974:71-72; Davydov 1977:200-202). In addition, some of the Russian-American Company's own personnel were already well acquainted with the Lake Iliamna region (Fedorova 1973:310), and likely knew something of adjacent drainages, if only through hearsay.

Before committing the company to the operation of a post in the region, the top colonial official, the chief manager, required more detailed information on local geography, populations, and resources. To this end, he dispatched Petr Korsakovskii to lead expeditions into the area in 1818 and 1819. The several detachments of the expedition explored the coast from Kvichak Bay to Goodnews Bay and one reached the Kuskokwim River via Lakes Iliamna and Clark, the upper Mulchatna River, and the Holitna or Hoholitna River (VanStone 1988:17-75).

The expedition confirmed that the region abounded in beaver and that the local population was well disposed toward trade. In addition, it reported the presence of many rivers which might facilitate travel throughout the region. In 1819 the company established a new post, Aleksandrovskii,[5] on Nushagak Bay near the mouth of the Nushagak River. The post long served as both a point of trade and a base from which

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[4]Cited as *Aleksey* Ivanov by Chernenko (1967:9).

[5]In the first year of its existence, the post was called Novo-Aleksandrovskii, i.e., New Aleksandrovskii, to distinguish it from the Aleksandrovskii post on English Bay. By 1821 the "Novo-" had been dropped from its name in company correspondence.

subsequent expeditions were dispatched into the interior (Fedorova 1973:308-310; VanStone 1973:7-10, 1979:46-47).

Russia had a long-standing interest in arctic coastal exploration and had already dispatched several expeditions to the Bering and Chukchi Seas for such purposes.[6] When the Russian-American Company joined the effort, its aims were more commercial than scientific. While the company did what it could to advance geographic knowledge, it was primarily interested in exploration as a means toward expanding and facilitating its trade.

In 1821 Chief Manager Matvei I. Murav'ev, encouraged by the results of Korsakovskii's expeditions, decided to extend the company's coastal explorations northward. He dispatched Vasilii S. Khromchenko,[7] brig *Golovnin*, and Arvid Adolf Etholen,[8] cutter *Baranov*, to Bristol Bay to commence work. The two vessels became separated after surveying the Goodnews Bay area. Etholen continued the coastal survey north to Kuskokwim Bay and Nunivak Island before proceeding to Stuart Island in Norton Sound. Khromchenko went directly to Norton Sound, where he discovered Golovnin Bay and surveyed the head of the sound as far as Cape Stephens. In Golovnin Bay he was received in a friendly manner by local inhabitants and met some visiting Native traders who soon departed for their homes in the west, their skin boat laden with furs (Ray 1975a:70-71; Tikhmenev 1978:176-177; VanStone 1973:14-19). Failing to find each other in Norton Sound, the two vessels returned separately to the colonial capital at Sitka. They brought new geographical information and reports of favorable receptions by area Natives (Liapunova and Fedorova 1979:224-228; Khlebnikov 1994:320-327).

Khromchenko and Etholen returned to the Bering Sea in the summer of 1822,

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[6]For a summary of Russian explorations in the Bering and Chukchi Seas in the period 1764-1822, see Belov (1956:416-454).

[7]Also spelled "Khramchenko" in Russian documents.

[8]In Russian, rendered Adolf Karlovich Etolin.

this time in a single vessel, the *Golovnin*. They were instructed to survey the mainland coast of Alaska from Cape Romanzof to Cape Prince of Wales and to collect as much information as possible about the region's inhabitants. Shallow water and unfavorable winds prevented the expedition from examining the coast between Cape Romanzof and Stuart Island. At Stuart Island, however, Khromchenko and Etholen were able to go ashore to visit a Native settlement. There they conducted trade both with people they had met the previous summer and with visitors from the nearby Alaskan mainland, obtaining beaver, fox, and land otter skins in exchange for knives, kettles, Circassian tobacco, and pipes.

After surveying the strait that separates Stuart Island from the mainland, and obtaining from a local resident a sketch map of the coastline south to the mouth of the Kvikhpak River, the expedition set sail for Golovnin Bay. There, too, Khromchenko was greeted by previous acquaintances, who offered beaver and fox skins in exchange for iron knives, spears, and tobacco (VanStone 1973:23-24, 67-81). The published portion of the expedition's journal for 1822 ends abruptly with the visit to Golovnin Bay. The remainder, preserved in manuscript in the State Archives of Perm Oblast', Russia, but apparently never published, describes Khromchenko's dealings with Natives at King Island and his approach to Kotzebue Sound and the Diomede Islands (Khramchenko [Khromchenko] 1822:83-106).

In his descriptions of the people of Stuart Island and Golovnin Bay, Khromchenko took note of their trade relations with other residents of the region. The Stuart Island settlement was apparently inhabited only in the trading season. The people who gathered there from the adjacent mainland traded primarily with the Aziiagmiut, inhabitants of Sledge Island, who brought knives, tobacco, reindeer-skin boots of Chukchi manufacture, and other items to barter for furs and caribou skins (VanStone 1973:70-75). A Golovnin Bay man who had traveled widely told Khromchenko that the inhabitants of King Island primarily traded furs with people of the Asian mainland, but often visited the Alaskan mainland and sometimes came to Golovnin Bay. The same informant reported that inhabitants of St. Lawrence Island often took walrus

hides to the Asian mainland for barter (VanStone 1973:79-80). Thus did the Russian-American Company begin to collect firsthand information on the intercontinental trade of the Bering Strait region.

The antiquity of the intercontinental trade is subject to debate. Some believe the trade ties to be prehistoric, considerably predating Russian arrival on the North Pacific in the 1640s (Black 1984:24; Burch 1988:234; Vdovin 1964:117-118). Others argue that, while there had long been trade ties between the coastal and interior peoples on either continent, the intercontinental trade was not established until European manufactured goods entered the region in quantity sometime after the 1640s (Ray 1975a:97-99). All agree, however, that the trade across Bering Strait increased greatly in volume and importance after 1789, when the Northeast Asian Chukchi began to trade regularly with Russians in the Kolyma region of Siberia, and was well established by the 1820s.

Dorothy Jean Ray has drawn upon the travel narratives of early visitors to the Bering and Chukchi Seas and upon her own extensive knowledge of the ethnohistory of the Bering Strait region to reconstruct the intercontinental trade network of the 1820s (Ray 1975a:88-89, 97-102, 121; cf. Vrangel' [Wrangell] 1835:607-611). From west to east moved European goods, especially metalware, tobacco, and beads, and both reindeer skins and skin clothing of Chukchi manufacture, while Alaskan land furs as well as walrus hides and ivory moved in the opposite direction. The primary source of European goods was an annual spring trade fair on the Little or Dry Aniui River, a tributary of the Kolyma. There Siberian merchants traveling in caravan met groups of Chukchi who came to barter both Alaskan furs and their own products for European wares. Of secondary importance in this regard were trade fairs held at Anadyr, on the river of the same name.

Some of the European goods were traded by way of Cape Chukotskii to the inhabitants of St. Lawrence Island, who offered walrus hides and ivory in exchange. Manufactured goods reached the Alaskan mainland through the inhabitants of the Diomede Islands, King Island, and Sledge Island, some of whom had begun to

specialize in trade. These island-dwellers and the people of Cape Prince of Wales obtained the goods from the Chukchi or from Siberian Yup'ik Eskimos whom they met on the Diomedes and perhaps on King Island and Siberia's East Cape (Cape Dezhnev). They then transported the goods in open boats to mainland trade fairs at locations which, though they may long have been locally important gathering places in the coast-interior trade, had gained new significance with increased intercontinental commerce. The King Islanders traded at Point Spencer at a gathering which drew mainland people from as far south as Golovnin Bay. The Sledge Islanders, the Aziiagmiut, traded around the shores of Norton Sound, where the Stuart Island area and the settlement of Pastolik hosted major gatherings. The people of Wales traded north into Kotzebue Sound, but the failure of early explorers to mention the great trade fair at Sheshalik has led Ray to suggest that this local market had not yet attained major significance (Ray 1975a:79, 98; cf. Burch 1994:126).

In exchange for their goods the island traders received land furs: fox, beaver, marten, land otter, and bear. Some of the furs had been trapped by inhabitants of the mainland coast, but others had been procured by people of the interior who, if they could not attend the coastal gatherings themselves, participated in the trade through intermediaries. Just as the inhabitants of the islands of Bering Strait had become middlemen in the trade between the Asian and Alaskan coasts, so did some of Alaska's coastal inhabitants assume the role of middlemen between the islanders and residents of the interior (Ray 1975a:98).

By the 1820s participation in the intercontinental trade was undoubtedly already of significance in the economies of some interior peoples but, in the absence of contemporary observations recorded by explorers or even well-dated archaeological evidence, it is difficult to judge how far inland the trade then extended. If, as Ray states, the locations of the new trade fairs were already well-established gathering places for the local coast-interior trade, it seems reasonable to assume that the intercontinental trade first spread inland along those traditional trade routes (cf. Burch 1988:238).

The earliest available Russian descriptions of the lower Yukon drainage, dating from 1834 to 1843, suggest that all the peoples living between the mouth of the Yukon and the lower reaches of the Koyukuk River maintained such traditional ties with the coast. To break those ties the Russians found that they would have to trade not only manufactured goods but the coastal products, such as the oil and skins of sea mammals, which all these peoples considered necessary for subsistence. When the Russians first entered the region, they found that people of the lower reaches of the Yukon traded primarily with the inhabitants of Pastolik. People of the Anvik area portaged from one of the tributaries of the Anvik River to Klikitarik on the Norton Sound coast east of Stuart Island, sometimes continuing on to Unalakleet. To the north, Kaltag-area residents traded via a portage to Unalakleet, while inhabitants of the lower Koyukuk River maintained ties to Kotzebue Sound via a portage to the Buckland River. This represents the minimum extent of significant involvement of Yukon drainage Natives in the intercontinental fur trade at the time of Russian contact. Only through archaeological investigation might we be able to determine the intensity of involvement farther up the Yukon at that time.

Establishment of Mikhailovskii Redoubt

Khromchenko's voyage of 1822 temporarily marked the end of Russian-American Company explorations north of Bristol Bay. Over the next five years company officials both in Russia and in the colonies were preoccupied with more pressing matters: implementation of the company's second charter, settlement of North American territorial boundaries with the United States and Great Britain, and various administrative concerns (RCS vols. 3-5; RCR vols. 3-5). With regard to southwestern Alaska, they contented themselves with what furs could be purchased at the Nushagak post through Native middlemen who ranged north to the Kuskokwim River and maintained trade relations with people of the lower Yukon (Fedorova 1979:190-191). In 1828, however, the company's Main Office in St. Petersburg issued instructions that reinvigorated exploration.

In its dispatch No. 346 of 13 April 1828, the Main Office noted that the sea otter, whose fur had always been the mainstay of company profits, had been reduced to near extinction in Alaska through overhunting. Though the export of sea otter furs from the colonies had long since fallen off drastically, the prevailing high prices for all furs had up to then cushioned the company against the effects of this loss. Recent declines in fur prices, however, had rendered the trade unprofitable and now prompted the Main Office to seek new sources of fur revenues.

In the view of the company's directorate, an increase in colonial exports of beaver and land otter offered the surest means to raise profits. Not only did it appear that the Alaskan mainland held large reserves of these animals, but the market for their fur promised to remain strong. The Main Office therefore ordered colonial chief manager Petr E. Chistiakov to expand company efforts to acquire beaver and land otter skins.

Based on the 1821 and 1822 reports of Khromchenko and Etholen, filed in St. Petersburg, the directorate recommended that Chistiakov turn particular attention to the mainland interior north of Bristol Bay and to the shores of Norton Sound. Etholen had written glowingly of the potential of the Nushagak and Kuskokwim river drainages. Natives whom he had met at the mouths of those rivers had reported an abundance of beaver in the interior and Etholen believed that a post located somewhere up the Nushagak could attract the trade of all of southwestern Alaska. Though Chief Manager Murav'ev had favored the idea, he had lacked both the means for further exploration and the manufactured goods needed for aggressive expansion of the trade.

The Main Office now resurrected the plan, recommending a permanent post in the interior at a point "near the places where the headwaters of the Nushagak, Kuskokwim, and Kvikhpak Rivers draw close together" or at some other convenient spot. It urged Chistiakov to dispatch a baidara (skin boat) expedition to the headwaters of the Nushagak to identify promising sites for the post and open trade relations with the Natives, and authorized him to commence operations at a location

recommended by the expedition.

Turning to Khromchenko's reports on the trade of Norton Sound, the Main Office took special note of the author's assurances that this region, too, abounded in beaver and land otter. According to Khromchenko, the local Natives found a ready market only for fox skins, which they sold to the Aziiagmiut for the Asian trade, and therefore did not bother to trap other furs for sale. Khromchenko believed that the Natives of Norton Sound would willingly hunt beaver and land otter if a company vessel would call at a fixed time and place every year to purchase them.

The Main Office consequently suggested that Chistiakov add a northern trading voyage to the itinerary of the vessel annually sent to Bristol Bay to supply Aleksandrovskii. The vessel could continue north to Golovnin Bay to trade for furs and on the return trip might call at St. Lawrence Island to purchase walrus ivory. Chistiakov was also authorized to establish a permanent post somewhere on Norton Sound if he thought it would advance the trade (RCR 6/346:fo. 101-104, 13 Apr 1828).[9]

Chistiakov took immediate action. In the spring of 1829 he dispatched an expedition under Ensign Ivan Ia. Vasil'ev to explore the courses of the Nushagak, Kuskokwim, and Kvikhpak, to verify whether beaver and land otter were plentiful there, and to find a site for the proposed post. Vasil'ev was also to investigate Native trade networks and to inquire whether the people of the lower Kvikhpak would willingly go to Stuart Island every year to barter with a company vessel (RCS 6/30:fo. 258-279, 4 Mar 1829; VanStone 1988:77-87). Though Vasil'ev returned with information about the upper Nushagak region, his Native guides had deserted before he could penetrate beyond the Kuskokwim drainage. The expedition was judged a relative failure (RCS 6/243-244:fo. 476-481v, 25 Sep 1829; VanStone 1988:89-109).

Undiscouraged, Chistiakov redoubled the exploration effort in the spring of 1830. He ordered Vasil'ev to extend his investigations along the Kuskokwim and

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[9]All references to the Russian-American Company Records, both the Communications Sent (RCS) and the Communications Received (RCR), are cited in the following format: volume number/letter number:folio number, date.

Kvikhpak Rivers in continuation of the previous year's work. At the same time he dispatched the brig *Chichagov*, commander A. Adolf Etholen, to Norton Sound and the Bering Strait region to initiate trade, to inform local traders that a Russian vessel would visit them annually, and to test local reactions to the suggestion that a permanent Russian post might be established in the region. Etholen was also to gather as much information as possible about the nature and extent of trade links between Asia, the Alaskan coast, and Alaska's interior (RCS 7/211:fo. 230-235v, 14 Jun 1830).

Both expeditions returned in early autumn to report moderate success. Though Vasil'ev had again failed to reach the Kvikhpak, he managed to ascertain that fur bearers were indeed abundant in that vicinity (RCS 8/191:fo. 139-140, 30 Apr 1831). Etholen brought few furs from the north, but his initial contacts at Golovnin Bay, Aziiak (Sledge), Ukivok (King), and St. Lawrence Islands, and Asia's St. Lawrence Bay had been promising (RCS 7/259:fo. 273-275, 5 Oct 1830).

It fell to Chief Manager Ferdinand P. Wrangell,[10] Chistiakov's successor, to plot the future course of expansion into these regions. Chistiakov had recommended that a third expedition be dispatched into the interior to complete the explorations with which Vasil'ev had been commissioned. Wrangell disagreed, arguing that the company already possessed sufficient information on the resources of the region to advance its plans. Rather than risk the chance that some thoughtless act by an expedition member might alienate the region's Natives, Wrangell proposed to entrust future expansion to company traders long resident on Bristol Bay and familiar with local languages and customs (RCS 8/191:fo. 139-141, 30 Apr 1831, 11/58:fo. 41-41v, 10 Apr 1834).

Accordingly, he ordered a detachment under Fedor Kolmakov, manager of the Aleksandrovskii post, to travel to the Kuskokwim and Holitna Rivers for trade in the autumn of 1832. The experiment was a success and before April of 1834 Kolmakov repeated the trip. A small trading station established on the Kuskokwim provided

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[10]In the Russian spelling, Ferdinand P. Vrangel'.

direct access to the rich fur resources of the region and served as a point of departure for further exploration. Moved across the river and renamed Kolmakovskii redoubt in 1841, it was to become the company's largest post in Alaska's interior (Fedorova 1979:205; Oswalt 1980:10-11, 13, 80-81).

Wrangell took a more direct hand in establishing a post on Norton Sound. He notified the Main Office that, based on the recommendations of Etholen and Vasil'ev, he considered Stuart Island to be the most convenient location for a permanent Russian settlement on the sound (RCS 8/191-192:fo. 140-142, 30 Apr 1831). For two years, however, Wrangell lacked the means to establish the post. In the interim, he did what he could to strengthen trade relations with the Natives of Norton Sound and Bering Strait and to gather navigational, geographical, and environmental information which might facilitate company operations in the region. To that end, he dispatched the brig *Chichagov*, commander Mikhail D. Teben'kov, north to the Bering Sea in the summers of 1831 and 1832.

The chief purpose of Teben'kov's voyage of 1831 was to reinforce trade relations initiated by Etholen the previous summer. Guided by excerpts from Etholen's report of 1830 and lists of the prices company vessels had paid in that region for furs and other products in 1822 and 1830, Teben'kov was to trade at Golovnin Bay, Stuart, St. Lawrence, Sledge, and King Islands, and Asia's Mechigmenskii Bay. Etholen had given tobacco on credit to Natives of Golovnin Bay. Teben'kov was to try to collect beaver and land otter furs from them in repayment of the debt and, if successful, was to issue them twice as much tobacco to be similarly repaid the following year.

Wrangell instructed Teben'kov to establish additional trade contacts on St. Lawrence Island, in settlements which Etholen had not managed to visit, and to try to convince the Chukchi at Mechigmenskii Bay that it would be easier for them to barter with Russian-American Company vessels than to travel to trade fairs on the Kolyma and Anadyr Rivers. Finally, Wrangell requested detailed information about the Stuart Island area, its climate, subsistence resources, anchorages, and ease of communication

with the Kvikhpak River (RCS 8/324:fo. 247v-252v, 26 May 1831).

The information with which Teben'kov returned was encouraging. Southeast of Stuart Island, between the mainland and St. Michael Island, he had discovered Teben'kov Bay (Tachik; present-day St. Michael Bay). As a semi-protected anchorage, it offered a more promising site for the new settlement than Stuart Island itself. At all his stops in the north, Teben'kov had found the Natives quite willing to barter and had advanced goods on credit at Golovnin Bay and elsewhere. The Natives whom he met at Teben'kov Bay had even asked him to leave a Russian trader with them. Though Teben'kov could not comply, the request suggested that local Natives would welcome a permanent Russian presence.

Less heartening were indications of the intensity of local involvement in the intercontinental trade. Teben'kov's report convinced Wrangell that the new post would have to be strongly manned in order to resist the expected reactions of the Aziiagmiut and Chukchi against any who threatened their middleman position. Unable to spare enough men to staff the post well, Wrangell postponed its establishment for another year, but again dispatched Teben'kov north to trade (RCS 9/126, 293:fo. 98v-99, 242-247v, 6 May and 4 Jun 1832).

Teben'kov's sailing orders for 1832 incorporated his own suggestions for improving the northern trade. Wrangell instructed him to visit Teben'kov Bay first, in an effort to barter furs from the inhabitants of the south shore of Norton Sound before the Aziiagmiut could arrive. There he was to leave a trader, as requested by the local Natives the previous year, who would also collect information regarding the Kvikhpak River and its inhabitants. Teben'kov's subsequent itinerary included stops at Golovnin Bay, Sledge, King, and St. Lawrence Islands, and Mechigmenskii Bay to conduct trade, to collect payment for goods advanced on credit the previous year and, if warranted, to issue new credit. Wrangell encouraged the officer to usurp the role of middleman in the Native trade by purchasing reindeer-skin clothing at Mechigmenskii Bay for resale on King and St. Lawrence Islands (RCS 9/293:fo. 242-247v, 4 Jun 1832).

Due to "unavoidable obstacles," Teben'kov was unable to leave a trader in the north. And, though the summer's trading venture was apparently a success, Teben'kov's report reinforced the impression that the Aziiagmiut had a firm hold on the commerce of Norton Sound.[11] It became clear to Wrangell that the establishment of a single post on the sound would not secure the furs of the Kvikhpak River for the Russian-American Company. Not only was it likely that the Aziiagmiut would hinder relations between the post and Pastolik, the major coastal settlement at which furs from the Kvikhpak were bartered, but the coastal inhabitants themselves were unwilling to help any such post to establish direct trade relations with inhabitants of the interior. Wrangell concluded that it would be necessary to establish a settlement on the great river itself (RCS 9/471:fo. 380-382v, 31 Oct 1832).

In the autumn of 1832 Wrangell received sufficient reinforcements in personnel and supplies from Russia to staff and provision his proposed post on Norton Sound, and by the spring of 1833 he had finalized plans for a permanent company establishment there (RCS 11/76:fo. 99v-100, 10 Apr 1834). Two vessels were dispatched north that May. The sloop *Urup*, under Teben'kov's command, headed for Norton Sound, carrying everything needed to establish the long-anticipated post. The schooner *Kvikhpak*, commander Nikolai Ia. Rozenberg, was bound for the Kvikhpak River to investigate its navigability and trade potential.

Teben'kov was instructed to proceed to the bay that bore his name. After notifying the local Natives of his intentions, he was to select a site and commence construction. By Wrangell's calculation, the vessel's crew and the detachment assigned to the new post could, under Teben'kov's direction, throw up a defensible compound within two weeks, for the barracks and blockhouses had been prefabricated

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[11]Teben'kov's report is not preserved in the collection "Records of the Russian-American Company, Correspondence of the Governors General." We do, however, find his assessment of the Aziiagmiut trade in his unpublished "Notes on Navigation to Unalaska and the Northern Limits of the Colonies" (Teben'kov n.d.:fo. 11-11v), apparently compiled in 1833 (Teben'kov 1981:3).

in Sitka and shipped, disassembled, aboard the *Urup*. Once the shore detachment was in a position to defend itself, Teben'kov was free to leave for his usual trade rendezvous at Golovnin Bay, St. Lawrence Island, Mechigmenskii Bay and, if time allowed, Sledge and King Islands. His former customers at Teben'kov Bay were to be referred to the new post, named Mikhailovskii redoubt, or Redoubt St. Michael, in Teben'kov's honor (RCS 10/235:fo. 127-134v, 19 May 1833).

Rozenberg was ordered to meet Teben'kov in Norton Sound for a briefing on local sailing conditions and to pick up any Native guides whom Teben'kov had managed to hire for him. His mission was to enter the Kvikhpak from the sea and to ascend the river to "the place where the language changes and whence the forests and...hunting of fur bearers begin." Failing this, Rozenberg was authorized to dispatch a baidara to the lower river via a route known to the Natives. In either case, the expedition was instructed to chart the river's course, make the acquaintance of its inhabitants, collect information on the region's fur resources and trade networks, and identify potential sites for a trading station. Its purpose was to lay the groundwork for the next stage of company expansion into the region (RCS 10/179:fo. 95-99, 9 May 1833).

Initiation of Trade Out of Mikhailovskii

The new redoubt was established without incident. Left in charge of the establishment and its complement of seventeen men[12] was Ivan Kuz'min,[13] a Russian peasant from Yaroslavl' province northeast of Moscow (RCS 18/418:fo. 373v-

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[12]The original roster included seventeen names. When Andrei Glazunov and a detachment of four, all from the *Urup* crew, were left at the redoubt to conduct explorations, it is not clear whether they replaced five from the roster or were added to it to bring the total to twenty-two (RCS 10/236:fo. 134v-136, 19 May 1833; cf. VanStone 1959:40). Given the chronic personnel shortages in the colonies, the first alternative is the more likely.

[13]Also spelled "Koz'min" in Russian documents.

374, 1 Jun 1840). He was charged with two tasks, establishment of trade relations with the surrounding peoples and penetration to the fur resources of the interior. To give him a head start, Wrangell and Teben'kov had informed him of everything they knew about the peoples and trade networks of the coast.

Rozenberg was supposed to supply information about the lower course of the Kvikhpak, but failed to enter the river. All that he had to show for his efforts was a rough chart compiled by ship's mate Andrei Glazunov, who, under Rozenberg's orders, had entered the Apoon Mouth of the Kvikhpak from Pastol Bay and explored this and part of another mouth before turning back. At the requests of Wrangell and Teben'kov, the creole[14] Glazunov agreed to remain at the redoubt to continue explorations over the winter of 1833-34 (RCS 10/235:fo. 131-131v, 19 May 1833, 11/76, 262:fo. 101v, 239, 10 Apr and 9 May 1834; Tikhmenev 1978:183-184).

It was not easy to establish trade relations with the surrounding peoples. Toward the end of the summer, when the redoubt was seeking a supply of fish for the winter, Natives visiting from Shaktol' Bay[15] assured Kuz'min that they had at their settlement many more fish and furs to trade than might be found in the direction of Pastol Bay. Kuz'min dispatched Glazunov to investigate. The creole trader went as far as the mouth of the Unalakleet River, where he learned that he had missed the fish run. He did, however, meet a group of Natives who called themselves the Ulukag-

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[14]Under the regulations appended to the Russian-American Company's second charter, dated 1821, creole status extended to persons "born of a European or Siberian [man] and an American [Native American] woman, or of a European or Siberian woman and an American [Native American man], as well as their children" (Black 1990:145-146). The creoles constituted a special social estate in Russia's American colonies, with specific privileges. On the nature and exercise of those privileges, see Black (1990).

[15]The Russians' Shaktol' Bay or Shaktolik Bay is not strictly equivalent to present-day Shaktoolik Bay. It was a broader term encompassing either the embayment between Cape Unalaklit, just north of the mouth of the Unalakleet River, and Cape Denbigh (Shaktol' bukhta; Kashevarov 1979:233, 1994:335), or the entire embayment between the point on which Klikitarik is located and Cape Denbigh (Shaktolik zaliv; Teben'kov 1981:Chart II, Norton Sound).

miut (Lower Yukon Koyukon of Kaltag-Unalakleet portage). They had just come down the Unalakleet to the coast with furs to barter to the Aziiagmiut, who were expected soon. Glazunov found them quite willing to sell the furs to him instead, but lacked the trade goods to seal the bargain. In vain did he try to convince them to follow him to the redoubt, for they feared venturing into the sea in their birchbark canoes. Glazunov hurried back to the redoubt himself to obtain the necessary goods. On his return to the Unalakleet River he found the Aziiagmiut already there, buying up all the furs. When they threatened him, he fled (Kashevarov 1979:230, 1994:329; RCS 12/153:fo. 148v, 30 Apr 1835).

The party of Aziiagmiut passed by the redoubt, bound for the Pastolik River. There had been many rumors that the Aziiagmiut would join forces with the people of that area, the Pastol'miut, to destroy the redoubt. Although the attack did not materialize, the Aziiagmiut did stop at the redoubt on their return trip to test the Russians' preparedness. By one account, they attempted to pick a fight at the post by taking away the sentries' guns, but Kuz'min managed to prevent further trouble. He may even have traded a few furs from the aggressors (Kashevarov 1979:230, 1994:329-330; RCS 12/153:fo. 148v-149, 30 Apr 1835).

As winter approached, Kuz'min was still frustrated in his trading efforts. He attempted to send Glazunov to the Pastol'miut, but rumors of their hostility toward the Russians rendered it impossible to hire a guide for the trip. A local Native who had been retained for this purpose asserted that he did not want to be held responsible if anything happened to Glazunov among the Pastol'miut. He announced, however, that he himself would be quite willing to take trade goods there to barter on the company's behalf. Kuz'min refused the offer and the trip was canceled.

Attempts to establish trade relations with inhabitants of the interior were equally unfruitful, though more promising. The small groups of interior Natives who occasionally visited the redoubt to verify rumors of the Russian presence rarely brought furs to trade, but said that they might do so in the future. Anxious to hasten development of the interior trade, Kuz'min decided to dispatch Glazunov on a winter

expedition to the Kvikhpak (Kashevarov 1979:229-230, 1994:328-330).

Glazunov intended to reach the Kvikhpak by way of the Apoon Mouth, which he had examined that summer. As the time for departure approached, however, rumors of Pastol'miut enmity multiplied. It was reported that they were lying in wait for Glazunov along the Apoon and by guile or by force preventing the Kvikhpak Natives from bringing their furs to the redoubt. When people who came from the direction of Shaktolik Bay indicated a shorter and safer route to the great river, Glazunov gladly altered his plans.

At the very end of December 1833 he set out with a small party for Kikhtaguk (Klikitarik), a coastal village east of the redoubt. From there the explorers proceeded inland to the Anvik River, which they followed to the Kvikhpak and populous Anvik village. The party continued down the Kvikhpak as far as the village of Anilukhtak-pak (near present-day Holy Cross), an important trade center, then portaged to the Kuskokwim River. After a stop at the company's post on the Kuskokwim, Glazunov and his men pushed on toward Cook Inlet but, for lack of food, had to turn back before reaching it. The expedition returned to Mikhailovskii redoubt, presumably by the same route, in mid April of 1834.[16]

Throughout his journey, Glazunov noted places that promised good yields of beaver, and at every village took care to explain to the assembled residents the advantages of trading with the Russians. At Anilukhtakpak he reached the destination of Rozenberg's aborted mission, "the place where the language changes [from Yup'ik Eskimo to Athabaskan] and whence...the hunting of fur bearers begin[s]." It seemed like an excellent location for an *odinochka*, a small trading post (Kashevarov 1979:231-232, 1994:330-332; RCS 12/153:fo. 148-148v, 30 Apr 1835; VanStone

[16]Russian-American Company and Russian Church personnel continued to use the Anvik River portage route from the Kvikhpak to Kikhtaguk (Kikikhtauk, Klikitarik) on Norton Sound into the 1860s (Netsvetov 1984:420, 463, and front endpapers).

1959, 1979:51-55; [Wrangell 1835]).[17]

Chief Manager Wrangell dispatched two vessels to Mikhailovskii redoubt in May 1834. The brig *Okhotsk*, commander Dmitrii F. Chernov, was ordered to deliver the annual supplies, then to proceed to Mechigmenskii Bay to trade. Stops at St. Lawrence, King and Sledge Islands and Golovnin Bay were dropped from the usual itinerary, some because their inhabitants could now trade with the redoubt, others because they were insufficiently profitable to detain a vessel needed back in Sitka as soon as possible (RCS 11/332:fo. 330-333, 16 May 1834). The second vessel, the schooner *Kvikhpak*, commander Aleksandr F. Kashevarov, was sent to assist in explorations in the vicinity of the redoubt.

Wrangell had reviewed Rozenberg's and Glazunov's reports of their attempts to enter the Kvikhpak in the summer of 1833. Considering the difficulties they had encountered, he concluded that the route by which the company reached the Kvikhpak was not important as long as its traders managed to establish direct contact with the river's inhabitants. Therefore, rather than continue the search for a navigable channel at the river's mouth, he instructed Kashevarov to seek ways to improve the redoubt's position in the trade, both with the coastal people at Pastolik and with the inhabitants of the Kvikhpak. The chief manager spelled out in detail how this might be accom-

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[17]Glazunov's original journal is unknown (Kashevarov 1979:229n; Khlebnikov 1994:385 n. 146), but an extract from it, prepared by Ferdinand P. Wrangell, is preserved in manuscript in the Archives of the Geographical Society of the USSR and reproduced on microfilm in the Shur collection, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks (RCS 12/155:fo. 149v-150v, 30 Apr 1835; [Wrangell 1835]). This extract is widely known, for it was published by Wrangell in Russian and German in 1836 and 1839, respectively, and appeared in French translation in 1841. Both the French and German versions have been translated into English (VanStone 1959; Wrangell 1980:69-80). In annotating his translation, VanStone noted a number of seeming errors and discrepancies, especially in directions traveled. The Russian manuscript resolves these problems, which apparently originated with the Russian publication of 1836, since both the German and French translations reproduce them. Unfortunately, the published Russian text was unavailable to me for comparison. I thank Dr. Lydia Black for bringing the manuscript and discrepancies to my attention.

plished but, as he had not yet received any reports of the redoubt's first year of operations, he ordered Kashevarov first to consult Kuz'min and Glazunov about the local situation and the year's explorations and to modify his actions accordingly (RCS 11/262:fo. 238-244v, 9 May 1834).

When Kashevarov arrived at Mikhailovskii in late June, he found Kuz'min to be optimistic about the redoubt's future prospects in the interior trade, both because Glazunov's expedition had opened a relatively convenient winter route to the Kvikhpak and because the post was drawing increasing numbers of curious interior Natives who promised to return to trade. Relations with the Pastol'miut, however, were still strained and the Apoon route to the Kvikhpak remained incompletely explored.

Kashevarov blamed the poor relations upon the Tachigmiut, Natives residing near the redoubt, who spread rumors of the hostile intentions of the Russians and Pastol'miut against each other and fostered distrust on both sides. Fearing that rumors current among the Pastol'miut would soon spread throughout the region and ruin business at the redoubt, he decided to go directly to this powerful and influential people with offers of friendship and trade. The expedition to the Pastol'miut was of a mere ten days' duration before illness forced Kashevarov to return to his vessel. Still, he was able to investigate the Apoon Mouth, the shortest route from the redoubt to the Kvikhpak River, survey some distance up the Pastolik River, and initiate cordial relations with the Pastolik people (Kashevarov 1979:232-233, 1994:333-334; RCS 12/153-154:fo. 147-149v, 30 Apr 1835).

Over the winter of 1834-35, Kuz'min intended to establish the company's first odinochka on the Kvikhpak, at Anilukhtakpak (RCS 12/153, 280:fo. 148v, 260v, 30 Apr and 14 May 1835). In February 1835 he dispatched Glazunov on his second winter expedition to the Kvikhpak to choose the site. After crossing from the redoubt to the Kvikhpak, presumably by the same route he had taken the previous winter, Glazunov and his small party proceeded south-southwest down the river for some 400 versts (ca. 428 km or 266 miles). This distance estimate, if correct, suggests that the party followed the Kvikhpak all the way down to its Apoon Mouth. On his return to

the redoubt in mid April, Glazunov recommended a site not at Anilukhtakpak but at Ikogmiut, a village located some distance downstream near the head of a different, and shorter, portage to the Kuskokwim. Kuz'min planned to send out a small party under Vasilii Donskoi to establish an odinochka there at the end of August, soon after receipt of the year's supplies (RCS 12/328:fo. 314v-315, 5 Oct 1835).

When the summer supply vessel arrived, Kuz'min could report progress on several fronts. Not only was he poised to open a post in the Kvikhpak drainage but, thanks to Glazunov's expeditions, the redoubt's trade returns continued to grow. In addition, construction at the redoubt was proceeding on schedule. Two storehouses, one for trade goods and one for food, had been completed in the past year (RCS 12/328:fo. 313v-314, 5 Oct 1835).

Soon after departure of the supply vessel, however, the redoubt suffered a temporary setback. Tensions which had been building as the Russian traders sought to undercut their Native counterparts on Norton Sound finally erupted into open hostilities. On 10 August 1835 nine company employees, about half the redoubt's staff, were attacked by a party of Aziiagmiut while cutting wood at some distance from the post. One workman was killed and seven were wounded before the Russian party managed to escape. The Aziiagmiut, who reportedly suffered casualties of two dead and six wounded, did not follow (RCS 13/297:fo. 188-188v, 14 May 1836, 14/320:fo. 363v-364, 14 Jun 1837).[18]

Kuz'min could not notify colonial officials of the incident until the winter mail

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[18]This is essentially the account preserved in the Russian-American Company correspondence. Much more detailed and colorful is that supplied by Zagoskin (1956b:68-69, 1967:97), who may have heard the story from a survivor--Ivan Zvonarev, who was wounded in the attack, and at least six others who were stationed at the redoubt at the time still served at Mikhailovskii when Zagoskin visited in 1842-1844. Zagoskin incorrectly states the year of the attack, and well might one question, as does Ray (1975a:125, 172), the accuracy of such details as the number of attackers ("some two hundred"). Tikhmenev's account paraphrases that published by Zagoskin and repeats the incorrect date, but increases the number of attackers to "several hundred" (Tikhmenev 1978:184-185).

trail was suitable for travel. Thus, it was not until the end of November that he dispatched his preliminary report (by way of the Anvik portage from the coast?) overland via Ikogmiut and the Kuskokwim River post to Aleksandrovskii on the Nushagak River. From there it was forwarded to Kodiak and reached Sitka with the spring mail. Ivan A. Kupreianov, who had taken over as colonial chief manager at the end of October 1835, received it just in time to revise the sailing orders of the supply vessel dispatched to the redoubt in mid May 1836. Kupreianov commissioned Mikhail Teben'kov, as a person familiar with the area, to conduct an investigation of the incident and to discourage future attacks by seizing as many Aziiagmiut as possible for transport to the colonial capital. A second vessel, the schooner *Kvikhpak* under Aleksandr F. Kashevarov, was sent to assist him in this retaliatory measure (RCS 13/297, 345:fo. 189v-190v, 218-222, 14 and 23 May 1836).

Teben'kov's investigation revealed that the redoubt staff bore partial responsibility for the attack. The work party had not been adequately armed and had failed to post a sentry at the work site. Their very laxness had encouraged the Aziiagmiut in their hostile intentions. Kuz'min received a reprimand on this account (RCS 14/269:fo. 307v-308, 25 May 1837).

Still, company officials did not wish to reinforce Native impressions of Russian weakness by leaving the incident unpunished. Teben'kov searched for some of the instigators of the attack, but no Aziiagmiut were to be found. In their stead, he demanded custody of five men from among the Natives living near the redoubt. Though they had not participated in the attack themselves, they had known of the Aziiagmiut's intentions and had assisted them by supplying information. The prisoners were transported to Sitka (RCS 14/320:fo. 363v-365, 14 Jun 1837).

Kupreianov's intention was that the captives should live in close proximity to the Russians at Sitka for a year, observe their numbers and technological advantages and experience their kindness, then return home to relate all they had seen to their countrymen. To their great misfortune, the five northerners arrived in the capital at the height of a smallpox epidemic and were severely stricken with the disease. The

four who survived this affliction were baptized and employed for pay in light work around the port of Sitka until the end of May 1837, when they were put aboard the annual supply ship for transport back to Norton Sound. Kupreianov authorized payment of damages to the relatives of the man who had died (RCS 14/262, 320:fo. 292v-294, 365-367, 25 May and 14 Jun 1837).[19]

The Kvikhpak Odinochkas, Ikogmiut and Nulato

The Aziiagmiut attack did not prevent Kuz'min from implementing his plan to establish a subordinate post at Ikogmiut in the autumn of 1835. Thanks to the diligent efforts of its manager, Vasilii Donskoi, the new odinochka yielded some 850 beaver and land otter skins in its first season of operation. The success of the first Kvikhpak post helped Mikhailovskii redoubt to register an increase in its fur returns for 1835-36 (RCS 13/297:fo. 191v, 14 May 1836, 14/266, 320:fo. 304, 367v-368, 25 May and 14 Jun 1837).

Company managers hoped eventually to establish a series of posts along the Kvikhpak. Even before the Ikogmiut odinochka had become a reality, they had begun to seek a suitable location for another station. When Chief Manager Wrangell dispatched the annual supply vessel north in May 1835, he instructed its commander, Chernov, to work out a plan for Glazunov's next expedition. Wrangell hoped the explorer would extend the search for beaver habitat and trade possibilities far into the interior of the mainland lying east and northeast of the redoubt (RCS 12/269:fo. 252v, 14 May 1835).

In composing the plan, Chernov turned his attention to the Unalakleet River,

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[19]The name of the man who died was Tulvi. Those baptized were the toyon Ekuli (Ioann), Achuk (Nikolai), Uch'vik (Mikhail), and Atanan (Vasilii). Ekuli, from Golovnin Bay, was one of the traders who had received goods on credit from Etholen in 1830 and Teben'kov in 1831 (RCS 9/293:fo. 246, 4 Jun 1832). Of the other three survivors, two were from near the redoubt and one was from "a little farther north," possibly Golovnin Bay (RCS 14/262, 320:fo. 292v-294, 365-367, 25 May and 14 Jun 1837).

known to be a route by which a considerable number of furs reached the coast. On his return to Sitka, he reported that Glazunov's third expedition would ascend the Unalakleet to its headwaters, cross to the Kvikhpak, and ascend the latter river as far as possible. If Glazunov encountered obstacles in carrying out this mission, he would instead explore the Chagiliuk (Innoko) River, said to be the source of most of the furs coming down the Kvikhpak to the Native traders of the coast (RCS 12/328:fo. 315, 5 Oct 1835). Unfortunately, the available documents mention nothing of Glazunov's activities over the ensuing winter of 1835-36.

Chief Manager Ivan Kupreianov hoped to continue his predecessor's policies with regard to northern exploration and trade. He decided to attach Glazunov to Mikhailovskii redoubt as "leader of exploring parties" for one more year and asked Teben'kov, then bound for the redoubt, to compile a plan to guide Glazunov's final expedition (RCS 13/297:fo. 191v-192v, 14 May 1836). Teben'kov ordered the explorer to undertake a spring expedition into the mainland interior north of the redoubt "in a direction in which he had not gone in previous years" (RCS 14/262:fo. 294, 25 May 1837).

The spring, 1837, journey carried Glazunov northeast up the Unalakleet River. According to Lieutenant Lavrentii Zagoskin, who interviewed his fellow explorer some five years later, Glazunov portaged from the Kuikhkhogliuk, a tributary of the Unalakleet, to Ttutago village on the Kvikhpak over a very difficult trail broken by steep, rocky cliffs.[20] Zagoskin suspected that Glazunov's Ulukagmiut guides had purposely led him over the least convenient portage in order to discourage Russian penetration into the region, but did admit that this route to the Kvikhpak was consid-

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[20]Orth (1971:548, 1007) suggests that Kuikhkhogliuk stream is the Ulukuk River, "30 or 40 mi. E of Norton Sound." From the distance Zagoskin reported traveling and the map that accompanies his published report (Zagoskin 1956b:map in pocket), it seems more likely that the Kuikhkhogliuk is the present-day Chiroskey River (cf. Wright 1995:28). Orth (1971:995) suggests that Ttutago was located on the Yukon River opposite the mouth of Bear Creek, which is consistent with Zagoskin's description of its location (Zagoskin 1956b:189, 1967:189).

ered to be shorter than others (Zagoskin 1956b:121, 189, 1967:135, 189; cf. Wright 1995:18, 28). Glazunov's itinerary after reaching Ttutago is not mentioned in the record at hand.

The 1837 summer supply vessel brought Glazunov's replacement, the creole Petr V. Malakhov. Schooled in Russia at the Kronstadt Navigation College, the new expedition leader was better trained than his predecessor in compiling maps and recording locations by astronomical observation, and company officials expected much of him (Fedorova 1973:213, 246; Pierce 1990:336-338; RCR 11/468:fo. 183v, 24 Mar 1838; RCS 14/320:fo. 369v, 14 Jun 1837). His orders were to continue explorations up the Unalakleet, while Glazunov returned to Sitka.

Malakhov set out on his first expedition in that direction in February 1838. With four companions, he reached the Kvikhpak by way of a portage that led from Tstsytseka Mountain (*Ses Tseege'*; Old Woman Mountain) on the Unalakleet River to the mouth of the Kakhokgotna, a tributary of the Kvikhpak[21] (Zagoskin 1956b:188-189, 1967:188-189; cf. Jones 1986:70; Wright 1995:28). The party then continued up the Kvikhpak to a village at the mouth of the Nulato River. They were hospitably received by Unillu, a leader (*starshina*) of the village, who informed the Russians that many Natives from upriver gathered there each spring to trade furs and to dry fish. Noting the village as a promising site for an odinochka, Malakhov continued up the Kvikhpak to the mouth of the Koyukuk River. He camped there until the ice went out in May, then floated down the Kvikhpak to Mikhailovskii redoubt (Zagoskin 1956b:135-136, 1967:146).

Company managers had for several years considered it desirable to establish another post on the Kvikhpak somewhere above Anvik (RCS 13/297:fo. 191v-192, 14 May 1836). Once it became apparent that Ikogmiut odinochka was tapping some of

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[21]Zagoskin (1956b:188, 1967:189) identifies this as the middle portage from the Unalakleet to the Kvikhpak. Wright (1995:28) suggests that the Kakhokgotna is the river *K'achuyhdotno'*, which Jones (1986:15) identifies as present-day Stink Creek.

the same sources of furs as the company station on the Kuskokwim, they decided that such a post was absolutely necessary. On the basis of Malakhov's favorable account of the Nulato area, the commander of the 1838 supply vessel instructed him to return to the site to build an odinochka that very winter (RCS 16/501:fo. 234v-235v, 4 Nov 1838).

It was an unpropitious time for new trading ventures in the north for, despite the company's best efforts, smallpox had appeared on the Kvikhpak that spring and quickly spread. The dread disease had broken out in Sitka late in 1835 (RCS 13/200:fo. 103v-104v, 4 May 1836). Through a vaccination program and quarantine of the crews of vessels sailing between colonial ports, company managers and medical staff tried to confine the epidemic to Southeast Alaska (RCS 13/21:fo. 15-16, 3 Mar 1836; cf. Gibson 1982-83:66-71). When, late in the summer of 1837, it nevertheless spread to the Kodiak archipelago, they redoubled their efforts, only too aware that once the infection reached the mainland they had no hope of containing it.

The creole Afanasii I. Klimovskii was preparing to take a supplemental shipment of trade goods from Kodiak to Mikhailovskii redoubt over the winter mail trail when he received Kupreianov's orders to vaccinate as many as he could along the way (RCS 15/454:fo. 13v-17, 5 Nov 1837). Between the end of February, 1838, when they arrived at Aleksandrovskii, and early May, when they reached Mikhailovskii, Klimovskii and his party vaccinated many and taught those how to vaccinate others in turn, but the disease outstripped them. A Native woman at Mikhailovskii died of smallpox on the very day they arrived (RCS 15/244:fo. 314-314v, 1 May 1838, 16/501:fo. 234-234v, 4 Nov 1838). The epidemic soon engulfed the villages of the southern shores of Norton Sound and by late summer had killed nearly half the Native population of settlements near the redoubt (RCS 16/501:fo. 234, 4 Nov 1838).[22]

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[22]The extent to which the epidemic spread along the coast beyond Norton Sound or inland beyond Nulato is not recorded, though Ray (1975a:178) asserts that it did not extend north of Koyuk on Norton Bay. Nor does the record provide mortality estimates for

In November of 1838, as the disease was claiming the last of its victims on the coast, Malakhov and his party set out for Nulato. Reaching their destination at the end of March, 1839, they found the epidemic still at its height and recorded the deaths of village leader Unillu and five members of his family. How many others died there is unknown, but by the time the infection had passed, Nulato village had only eight Native residents: three women, four children, and one young man. In February of 1838 the local population had been twenty-nine (eleven men and eighteen women and children).

Malakhov and his party stayed at Nulato until spring, building a small cabin about half a verst (ca. 1/2 km or 1/3 mile) upstream from the Native village and doing what they could to assist the few village residents who remained. In May a shortage of food forced them to return to Mikhailovskii (Zagoskin 1956b:135-136, 1967:146-147).

In the wake of the smallpox epidemic, Russian relations with the Natives of Alaska's interior were unsettled. On the lower Kvikhpak, a party of Natives attacked Ikogmiut odinochka in the spring of 1839, killing post manager Petr Brusenin and two other company employees. According to rumor, the attackers came from the lower Kuskokwim, but they were never positively identified and investigations were finally dropped lest trade out of the Kuskokwim odinochka be disrupted (RCR 13/55:fo. 279, 28 Mar 1841; RCS 20/486:fo. 403, 15 Oct 1841; Zagoskin 1956b:202, 259, 287, 1967:200, 252).

Late in the summer of 1839 an Ikogmiut village leader (*starshina*) and his brother were transported to Sitka for questioning in connection with the incident.[23]

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villages of the lower Yukon. Based on comparisons of village population estimates recorded by Glazunov in 1834 and Zagoskin in 1843, VanStone calculates that as many as two-thirds of the inhabitants perished in the villages of the Yukon Ingalik (VanStone 1979:59-60).

[23]The village leader, Achugunok, fell ill and died in Sitka. His brother Tizhik, age twenty, baptized Nikolai in Sitka on 6 March 1840, was returned to the north aboard the

Their testimony and local investigations identified as the immediate causes of the attack the lax security maintained at the post and, possibly, disdainful treatment of the Natives by post personnel (RCS 17/498:fo. 487-487v, 21 Oct 1839, 18/292:fo. 283v-285, 14 May 1840). In broader context, however, company managers understood the Ikogmiut attack, a similar attempt against the Kuskokwim odinochka, and rumors of other plots, to be manifestations of Native bitterness against the Russians for unleashing smallpox upon them.

In the autumn of 1839, Kupreianov dispatched Afanasii Klimovskii to the Alaska Peninsula and Nushagak region to spread the word that the Russians had not intentionally introduced smallpox and felt nothing but goodwill toward the Native populations. As a precaution, he also sent reinforcements to Aleksandrovskii and Mikhailovskii the following spring (RCS 18/192:fo. 195v-199, 2 May 1840). The latter measure proved unnecessary. The summer supply vessel returned from the north with reports that peaceful relations had been restored on the lower Kvikhpak and Ikogmiut odinochka had been reopened (RCS 19/150:fo. 194v, 27 Sep 1840).

The smallpox epidemic, and a growing recognition among Native traders of the potential effects of a Russian presence upon local commerce, also gave rise to rumors of Native enmity in the region lying between Unalakleet and Nulato. Petr Malakhov returned to the region late in the autumn of 1839, commissioned to accompany the trading party as far as Nulato, then to push on as far up the Kvikhpak as possible, cross over to the Kuskokwim drainage, and descend to Aleksandrovskii by way of the Holitna and Nushagak Rivers. His assigned task was to collect accurate measurements of latitude and longitude which would allow the company to tie together all previous expeditions into this vast region and compile one master map (RCS 17/322:fo. 322-322v, 27 May 1839).

When Malakhov and his party reached Nulato in December, they found the

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1840 summer transport (RCS 18/273:fo. 269-269v, 14 May 1840; ARCA 1839-40:fo. 11v-12).

area deserted. Unable to purchase food locally, they returned to the mouth of the Unalakleet River, where the company kept a stock of dried fish.[24] On their second trip up the Unalakleet they met two Natives who warned them of an ambush ahead. The party proceeded with caution, firearms loaded, but met with no difficulties. Unfortunately, as they were loading their sledges to move on, Malakhov's pistol discharged and killed one of his companions, creole Lavrentii Ovchinnikov (ARCA 1839-51). Whether because of the accident or because of continued rumors of Native hostility, Malakhov did not advance Russian explorations into the interior that season.[25]

Despite the ominous rumors, the first few seasons of operations out of Nulato passed uneventfully. Though the Native population in the vicinity of the post had been greatly reduced by disease and the village of Nulato abandoned, a modest trade developed with people who came down from the Koyukuk River. Even in the 1840-41 season when trader Nordstrem, caught by freeze-up en route up the Kvikhpak from Mikhailovskii, was forced to winter at a village at the mouth of the Khutul (probably Khotol River, some 50 miles below Nulato), the Koyukuk River people came to seek him out (Zagoskin 1956b:137, 181-182, 1967:147, 183).

Vasilii Deriabin was appointed first permanent manager (*baidarshchik*) of Nulato odinochka in 1841 (RCS 20/304:fo. 313, 21 May 1841). When he arrived at Nulato in September to put the post in order for the winter, he found the cabin

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[24]It is uncertain in what year a company fishing station was first established at the mouth of the Unalakleet. It may have been put into operation as early as 1834 to feed the personnel of Mikhailovskii redoubt. It was almost certainly in place by 1836, when the redoubt received its first shipment of thirteen draft dogs imported from Okhotsk, or by the following season at latest, for it was the redoubt's chief source of dog feed (RCS 13/226, 329:fo. 121, 211, 4 and 14 May 1836).

[25]In the summer of 1840 Malakhov was transported back to Sitka for an investigation of the shooting. Though he was eventually acquitted of wrongdoing by the courts in Okhotsk and resumed his duties in the colonies, he never returned to the Yukon (ARCA 1839-51).

burned. There was no telling when the destruction had occurred. Because company trader Nordstrem had wintered below Nulato the previous season, the site had been unoccupied since about May 1840. With winter coming on, Deriabin did not have time to investigate the matter. He quickly constructed a new cabin slightly downriver from the original site and conducted business as usual. Over the winter of 1841-42 the post for the first time enjoyed direct trade relations with Natives from "upriver," presumably from areas lying up the Kvikhpak beyond the mouth of the Koyukuk. The beaver they brought down swelled the post's modest returns by nearly one half (Zagoskin 1956b:137, 181-182, 1967:147, 183).

The parties responsible for burning the first Nulato trading cabin were never positively identified. Rumors current at Mikhailovskii in August 1842 accused the "Takaiaksa" (Lower Yukon Koyukon of Kaiyuh area), Natives who lived along the Kvikhpak from Nulato down to Khogoltlinde (in the vicinity of present-day Kaltag) and beyond to present-day Blackburn Island. Specialists in the coast-interior trade, the Takaiaksa occupied one end of the easiest portage from Unalakleet and, according to Zagoskin, had a reputation for threatening Russians as they passed through. According to an official report filed by Andrei Glazunov, however, the Takaiaksa were innocent of the deed (RCS 22/166:fo. 122, 27 Apr 1843; Zagoskin 1956b:129-130, 177, 1967:141-142, 180). There is no indication in surviving records that company managers pursued this matter further. They focused instead upon the growing trade out of Nulato.

CHAPTER 3
REORGANIZING THE NORTHERN TRADE

The mere establishment of trading stations on the Kvikhpak did not guarantee the Russian-American Company control of the region's trade. This was quite clear to A. Adolf Etholen, veteran of the company's earliest ventures into the northern Bering Sea. When he assumed the colonial chief managership in 1840, he found company operations in the north to be hampered by poor coordination of activities among the several posts, inadequate knowledge of Native trade networks into the interior, and insufficient attention to development of the coastal trade. Throughout his five-year administration, Etholen sought to remedy these shortcomings, both by systematizing the operations of existing posts and by opening new avenues of trade. His successor, Mikhail D. Teben'kov, another pioneer of the early northern trade, made every effort to bring Etholen's policies to fruition.

ETHOLEN ADDRESSES THE NORTHERN TRADE

The expansion of Russian trade activity on the Kvikhpak in the period 1835 to 1840 was reportedly attended with an increase in the volume of furs shipped out of Mikhailovskii redoubt. Each year through 1838, Chief Manager Ivan Kupreianov assured the Main Office that the region's fur returns had grown by at least a small amount. Kupreianov offered no assessment of the Mikhailovskii returns for fiscal year 1838-39. They presumably declined due to the smallpox epidemic then raging in the region. By the following year, however, the trade had apparently rebounded. Four months after assuming office, Chief Manager A. Adolf Etholen had the pleasure of informing the company's directors that "slightly more furs than before" had been received from Mikhailovskii for fiscal year 1839-40 (RCS 19/150:fo. 194v, 27 Sep 1840).

Sometime over the ensuing winter Etholen must have examined the Mikhailov-

skii accounts in more detail, for by May 1841 he had reversed his initial assessment. He exhorted Vasilii Donskoi, now manager at Mikhailovskii, to exert every effort to increase the region's returns, noting that the take of furs had "in recent years extraordinarily declined in the North." Though Etholen attributed some of the decline to the effects of the smallpox epidemic upon local Native trappers, he suggested that the low returns for 1839-40 largely reflected a lack of effort on the part of company traders.

The chief manager was convinced that far too many furs slipped past the company's establishments to be bought up by the Aziiagmiut, who still traded along the southern shores of Norton Sound, and urged Donskoi to find some means to cut off this competition. While he did not advocate bloodshed, neither did Etholen rule out a show of force. He recommended that Donskoi post an armed, oar-propelled vessel to turn back any Aziiagmiut found approaching Pastolik and to warn them that they risked capture if they attempted to visit in the future (RCS 20/304:fo. 314v-315, 21 May 1841).

With regard to the Kvikhpak odinochkas, Etholen ordered improvements in management, transport, and, above all, defense. He appointed two veterans of northern service to head the small posts. As already noted, Vasilii Deriabin, a peasant from Arkhangel'sk province in Russia, was sent to Nulato. He had participated in all of Glazunov's and Malakhov's expeditions to the Kvikhpak and was better acquainted than most with that country and its people. Dispatched to Ikogmiut was explorer Andrei Glazunov himself, who was sent back to the north from Sitka for that purpose in 1841. As the better educated of the two, Glazunov was to keep the books for both posts. Under each manager were no more than five or six men. Remembering the recent attack on Ikogmiut, Etholen warned against leaving the odinochkas understaffed while engaged in transporting furs and supplies to and from the redoubt, and authorized the hiring of trustworthy local Natives to fill out the transport crews. In further consideration of defense, he ordered construction of a stockade and watchtowers at each of the odinochkas and delivery of a light cannon or two from the redoubt to Ikogmiut (RCS 20/304:fo. 313-314, 21 May 1841).

Even as Etholen composed these orders, Mikhailovskii and its subordinate posts were completing a very successful season. When the northern transport returned to Sitka in the fall, it brought a "significantly richer" cargo of furs from the redoubt than previously. Convinced that the region held still greater promise, Etholen increased his requisition of trade goods for 1843 and continued to plot the future development of the northern trade (RCS 20/423:fo. 362, 365v, 18 Sep 1841). The orders he issued the following spring emphasized both improvement of existing operations and explorations preparatory to future expansion.

Etholen turned his attention first to the ticklish matter of pricing. In 1839, when Afanasii Klimovskii visited the Nushagak area to restore relations with survivors of the smallpox epidemic, Natives there had petitioned for higher prices for their furs. In approving the request, company managers were sufficiently aware of the speed with which such news traveled to realize that they would have to raise prices in the northern trade as well (RCS 20/43:fo. 51v-54v, 25 Feb 1841, 21/95:fo. 67-67v, 2 Apr 1842). Ever reluctant to pay more for furs than was necessary, Etholen issued the following guidelines for implementing the new tariff at Mikhailovskii: The highest payments were to go to coastal Natives who traded at the redoubt, in order to wean them from the intercontinental trade. At Nulato, prices could be kept nearly the same as before, both because competition there was less intense and because it was more difficult to supply the inland post with trade goods (RCS 21/172:fo. 119-119v, 1 May 1842).

With regard to the intercontinental trade, the chief manager revised his previous year's orders. After thanking Donskoi for an unspecified "decisive action" with a group of "Maligmiut" (Iñupiaq) traders in the late summer of 1841, Etholen advised a rapprochement of sorts. He asked the redoubt manager to try to renew friendship with the Maligmiut by means of small gifts and authorized him to allow the traders to pass through to Pastolik if he could induce them, on the return trip, to sell him the furs they had purchased there. Any who refused to sell to the company were to be denied passage to Pastolik and the Kvikhpak in the future (RCS 20/177:fo. 125,

1 May 1842).

Still dissatisfied with the state of transportation between the redoubt and Nulato, Etholen addressed his most detailed instructions to that topic. First, he notified the redoubt manager that he was sending a shallow-draft wooden boat that could deliver a whole year's supplies and provisions to Nulato in a single trip. Second, he created the position of "traveling baidarshchik" to oversee all transport between Nulato and the redoubt. In late summer this man would command the baidara (boat) crew delivering supplies to the odinochka by way of the Kvikhpak River. In winter he would sledge to the post over the Unalakleet portage to pick up the season's furs. These measures would free the Nulato staff for other work at the post. Finally, Etholen authorized the establishment of a permanent odinochka at the redoubt's Unalakleet fishing station, both for trade and as a way station on the winter route to Nulato (RCS 21/172:fo. 119v-121, 1 May 1842).

In improving the supply lines to Nulato, Etholen had a larger goal in view. He hoped to use the post as a base from which to extend the trade still farther into the interior, both east up the Kvikhpak and north toward Kotzebue Sound. Before committing company resources to such a program of expansion, the chief manager required some very basic information about routes of communication, trade potential, and the lay of the land in this unexplored region. He assigned the investigations to an ambitious young officer in the company's employ, Lieutenant Lavrentii A. Zagoskin.

Explorations of Lieutenant Zagoskin

Etholen prefaced his instructions to Zagoskin with a general statement of the problem before him. For a decade the company had been sending expeditions into the interior out of Mikhailovskii and out of Aleksandrovskii redoubt on the Nushagak River. Though the expedition commanders had done their best, company officials found their travel journals lacking in detail, especially in the precise determinations of geographical location needed for choosing the most efficient sites for new posts. Etholen expected Zagoskin, better educated than the previous explorers, to record his

observations with more care (RCS 20/169:fo. 109-109v, 1 May 1842; cf. Zagoskin 1956b:47-48, 1967:81-82).

The chief manager commissioned Zagoskin with four specific tasks in the first year of the expedition:

1) To explore the mouth and lower reaches of the Buckland River, which flows into Eschscholtz Bay, Kotzebue Sound. According to the information at Etholen's disposal, furs from the Kvikhpak River were reaching Kotzebue Sound by way of the Koyukuk and Buckland Rivers. There the furs were purchased by the Chukchi, who annually visited the shores of Kotzebue Sound for trade. Etholen believed that the easiest means by which to intercept the trade would be to establish a new post near the mouth of the Buckland River, but first wanted information on the suitability of the site, local availability of subsistence resources, and convenience of communication with the Kvikhpak. The supply vessel that brought Zagoskin north was to take him on to Kotzebue Sound and stand by until he had completed his investigations, but no later than 20 August.

2) To explore the Kuiukak (Koyukuk) River. Zagoskin was to travel from Mikhailovskii redoubt to Nulato over the winter trail. From Nulato he was to proceed to the Koyukuk to investigate further the nature of the communication between the Kvikhpak and Kotzebue Sound and to determine whether it would be more profitable to replace Nulato with a redoubt at the mouth of the Koyukuk.

3) To explore the Kvikhpak River above Nulato. As soon as the Kvikhpak was free of ice in the spring, Zagoskin was to ascend it as far as possible, returning to Nulato before the onset of autumn.

4) To explore the Chageliuk (Innoko) River.[26] From Nulato Zagoskin was to descend to Ikogmiut before the onset of winter, by way of a portage to the Innoko

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[26]On the map compiled by Zagoskin (1956b:map in pocket), the name "Chageliuk" is applied only to present-day Shageluk Slough and the lower Innoko River. In Etholen's instructions, however, it appears that this term designates the entire portion of the Innoko that runs roughly parallel to the Yukon.

if possible. From Ikogmiut he was to take the winter trail to Kolmakovskii redoubt on the Kuskokwim River, there to await further instructions.

Etholen instructed Zagoskin to take sufficient astronomical observations to allow him to chart and tie together the regions through which he traveled. In this, he was to pay particular attention to the locations of major bends in the Kvikhpak, the mouths of its tributaries, and the shortest portages to the Innoko and Kuskokwim. Zagoskin was not only to describe the populations, industries, resources, and geography of the places he himself visited, but was to question the Natives in detail about places beyond the reach of the expedition. In short, he was to record "all that might lead to the future profits of the Russian-American Company and to elucidation for the scholarly world, to which this vast part of the American continent is still entirely unknown" (RCS 20/169:fo. 109v-114v, 1 May 1842).

The thirty-four-year-old Zagoskin had already spent more than two years in the colonies. He transferred from naval to Russian-American Company service late in 1838 and had since 1839 commanded company transports on routine voyages between Okhotsk, Sitka, and California. Eager to attract the attention of his superiors, he had as early as 1840 petitioned Ferdinand P. Wrangell, by then a company director, for just such an assignment as now lay before him. He gladly accepted this opportunity to distinguish himself (Chernenko 1967:13-15; Zagoskin 1956a:377).[27]

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[27]Fedorova (1979:202-203) suggests that company directors F. P. Wrangell and K. T. Khlebnikov had laid plans for such explorations as early as 1838 and intended to send Ivan Ia. Vasil'ev back to the colonies for that purpose. She bases her hypothesis upon a statement, found in Khlebnikov's obituary, that "Mr. Vasil'ev, assigned to a trip to Siberia, Kamchatka, and America," was at a dinner hosted by Wrangell and attended by Khlebnikov the last evening of Khlebnikov's life (Polevoi 1838:5-6). Her interpretation that "Mr. Vasil'ev" refers to Ivan Ia. Vasil'ev does not appear to be substantiated by the documentary record. I consider it much more likely that this is a reference to Captain Lieutenant of the Guards Nikolai Aleksandrovich Vasil'ev, adjutant to the head of the Chief Naval Staff, who in the spring of 1838 was about to leave on a government mission to Okhotsk, Kamchatka, and Sitka. Detained by business in Kamchatka, N. A. Vasil'ev never reached the colonies (RCR 11/688:fo. 301-301v, 3 May 1838; RCS 16/502, 507:fo. 236, 240, 4 Nov 1838, 17/176:fo. 161, 29 Apr 1839).

The expedition began poorly. Delayed for nine days by the ice choking Norton Sound, the supply vessel carrying Zagoskin did not reach Mikhailovskii redoubt until 10 July. Anxious to get on with his explorations in Kotzebue Sound, Zagoskin went ashore to see to dispatching his equipment on to Nulato and to pick up a Native interpreter and some extra crew. He soon ran up against the realities of life in the northern outpost. The Native interpreter did not wish to leave his home. Redoubt personnel who had been assigned to join the expedition were either too busy with routine business or too ill to participate. Neither could Zagoskin find anyone to whom he was willing to delegate the many preparations still to be made for his winter trip. Finally, there was the matter of the ice that still lingered in the northern Bering Sea. There would be little time between its clearance and the vessel's August 20th departure in which to conduct proper investigations in Eschscholtz Bay. Zagoskin decided to drop Kotzebue Sound from the expedition's itinerary to prepare for the trip to Nulato (Zagoskin 1956b:57-58, 1967:89-90).

Severely taxing the limited means of transportation available at the redoubt, Zagoskin managed to dispatch most of his gear and supplies up the Kvikhpak by boat before freeze-up. He himself, with most of the expedition crew, arrived at Nulato in January 1843 by way of the winter trail from Unalakleet. At the end of February he set out from the post with a Native guide and a crew of five to explore the lower Koyukuk River and the overland route to Kotzebue Sound.

From the mouth of the Koyukuk, Zagoskin's party followed a well-beaten track toward the north, sometimes traveling along the river's bank, sometimes taking a direct route overland from one bend in the river to another. Many of the local inhabitants were off hunting caribou in the surrounding hills. Those whom the party met were hospitable, but full of warnings about the unfriendliness of the "Maleigmiut" farther upriver. Interpreting these stories as a ploy to keep Russian traders off the upper river, Zagoskin pushed on northward to a village opposite the mouth of the Kateel River. There, as elsewhere, he met a friendly reception.

Being at the limits of the country known to his Native guide, the explorer tried

through interpreters to learn as much as he could about the country beyond. What interested Zagoskin most was the information that Kotzebue Sound was only twelve to sixteen days away via the crossing which started near this village. Unable to obtain a local guide, he decided to try to find the route himself. As he had suspected, a well-trodden trail leading up the Kateel River valley was still discernible despite a fresh cover of snow. Some two days' travel along the trail thoroughly convinced Zagoskin that he had located the Native route to the coast. Lacking the time and resources to follow it farther, he recorded his latitude, 65° 35' 46" N, and turned back. The party hurried back to Nulato over a melting snow pack (Zagoskin 1956b:133-148, 1967:144-157).

Zagoskin busied himself about Nulato from mid March until the ice had gone out on the Kvikhpak and the river was sufficiently clear of debris for safe travel in a skin boat. When the water level finally began to drop in the first days of June, he set out with five or six paddlers and a Native guide to explore the upper river. A second guide soon joined them. Over the next two weeks the expedition ascended to within a short distance of the mouth of the Noggoiia (Nowitna) River, more than one hundred miles above Nulato. There, rising water had turned a normally navigable stretch of shallows into churning rapids against which the skin boat could make no headway. The two guides, in a canoe, found their way through to the Nowitna, where they purchased a few beaver. With other explorations still to be completed downriver, Zagoskin did not want to waste time waiting for the water level to fall so that he, too, could pass. He decided to turn back.

As on the Koyukuk River trip, Zagoskin enjoyed a friendly, if cautious, reception from Natives met along the way. On the Koyukuk, most of his encounters had been at permanent villages. Most of the people whom he met on the Kvikhpak came down to the river only to fish and to trade. The explorer questioned these travelers both about their home country and about the headwaters of the Kvikhpak, but, finding it necessary to work through a chain of three interpreters "who barely understood each other," he did not place much trust in the answers he received.

Wherever he met Natives with furs to sell, Zagoskin urged them to visit the Nulato post. There, he averred, they would find a large stock of beads and other desirable goods. Near the end of his upriver journey, he met one large party whose members were already quite familiar with the trade at Nulato. They were inhabitants of the Koyukuk River, returning home heavily laden with the marten, beaver, and wolverine skins they had purchased farther up the Kvikhpak. They seemed surprised and troubled to find the Russians so far upstream (Zagoskin 1956b:154-173, 1967:162-177).

The expedition returned to Nulato early in July. Zagoskin was planning to leave for Ikogmiut as soon as his journals and equipment were in order, but unusual activity among the local Natives prompted him to delay. First there were rumors of hostile "Naleigmiut" (Maleigmiut, i.e., Iñupiat) lurking in the neighborhood. Then post manager Deriabin learned that the Takaiaksa and Ulukagmiut, Natives of the Kaiyuh area and Kaltag-Unalakleet portage, planned to trade with people of the lower Koyukuk at the mouth of that river rather than at Nulato, as had been their habit in the past. Suspecting a conspiracy among the Native traders to attack the post and to blame it on the phantom Naleigmiut, Deriabin asked the expedition to stay to reinforce the odinochka until the Natives had dispersed.

Zagoskin decided to attempt a bluff. As the downriver Natives were passing on their way to the Koyukuk, the post fired a gun to attract their attention. When the traders stopped in to see what was wanted, they found the post's detachment under arms. It was common knowledge that the Takaiaksa had the previous summer attacked a group living still farther downriver, many of whom had traded at Nulato. Zagoskin demanded that the culprits step forward, then proceeded to lecture them on this and other offenses in which they had been implicated and on the punishment for such crimes. When he considered them sufficiently frightened and respectful, he assumed a kindly demeanor, thanked them for their recent friendliness, and bade them a cordial farewell.

This blustering show of force apparently did no damage to business at the

odinochka. When the Native traders returned from the mouth of the Koyukuk, they bartered half of the furs they had acquired to the Nulato post. They took away the other half to barter for items the Russian establishments did not stock (Zagoskin 1956b:173-175, 1967:177-179).

The expedition left Nulato for the last time on 2 August 1843, bound for Ikogmiut. There Zagoskin received the spring dispatches from Sitka. Though they did not include specific orders for the second year of explorations, Zagoskin knew that Chief Manager Etholen intended him to examine the upper Kuskokwim. He decided to spend most of the winter at Kolmakovskii redoubt on the Kuskokwim, then proceed to the lower reaches of the Innoko for exploration. After readying his summer equipment at Ikogmiut, he would return to Kolmakovskii redoubt to await the opening of navigation on the Kuskokwim (Zagoskin 1956b:202-203, 1967:201).

Keeping to this plan, Zagoskin learned something of winter operations at Kolmakovskii redoubt, then in February surveyed that portion of the lower Innoko not covered in the 1839 explorations of trader Petr Kolmakov. On 1 April 1844, shortly after his return to Ikogmiut, Zagoskin finally received his official orders for the 1843-44 expedition. They had been sent from Sitka on 10 August of the previous year by way of Kodiak and the Aleksandrovskii and Kolmakovskii redoubts (Zagoskin 1956b:234-247, 1967:231-241). The dispatch instructed the explorer to proceed as far up the Kuskokwim as possible, then to seek the shortest route between that river and Kenai Bay (Cook Inlet). If for some reason he could not penetrate very far up the river, he was at least to gather as much information as possible about the region from Semeon Lukin, manager of Kolmakovskii redoubt. The expedition was then to return to Sitka by way of Aleksandrovskii (RCS 22/471:fo. 453v-456v, 10 Aug 1843).

Zagoskin calculated that he could not expect to explore the Kuskokwim and still reach Aleksandrovskii in time to catch that season's vessel to Sitka. If he left by way of Mikhailovskii, however, he could briefly survey not only the Kuskokwim but the lower reaches of the Kvikhpak and part of the southern coast of Norton Sound as well. In the last ten days of May Zagoskin and his party penetrated up the Kusko-

kwim as far as the mouth of the Takotna River, which Petr Kolmakov had ascended on his way to the upper Innoko in 1839. Returning to Kolmakovskii redoubt, the expedition quickly crossed to Ikogmiut and descended the Kvikhpak to the coast by way of the Apoon Mouth. They reached Mikhailovskii redoubt on 21 June 1844, a few days before the arrival of the supply vessel that transported them back to Sitka (Zagoskin 1956b:247, 273-296, 1967:241, 263-282).

Zagoskin's Results and Recommendations

Zagoskin arrived in Sitka at the end of September 1844. Over the winter he put his notes and collections in order and prepared his reports to Chief Manager Etholen, and in May 1845 departed the colonies aboard a company vessel bound for Okhotsk. Once back in St. Petersburg, he prepared a narrative account of his explorations. Published in two parts, in 1847 and 1848, the work received high praise in scientific circles for its descriptive detail and breadth of coverage (Chernenko 1967:19-21).

Zagoskin's account was more than a log of his explorations, a compilation of latitudes and longitudes and physical descriptions of the country through which he passed. True to his instructions, the young lieutenant had made an effort to record everything that might be of future benefit to the company. During the long months spent at the various company posts between excursions, he collected ethnographic and natural history specimens, inquired into the operation and history of each post, and compiled data on the distribution, life, and trade of the region's Native groups, supplementing personal observation with information obtained from company files and from conversations with both company employees and, through interpreters, some of the Natives. The explorer's published account incorporated information, though sometimes contradictory or ambiguous, from all these sources.

Zagoskin's account of his travels was a revelation to his contemporaries in Russia, most of whom had little previous knowledge of the region the author described. For today's readers, it remains as instructive for its review of the history

of Russian activities in the region, much of it based upon documents now lost, as for its first-hand observations. For Etholen, whose files contained journals and maps of previous expeditions into the region as well as reports and business accounts from the various posts, Zagoskin's work was valuable only insofar as it provided him with new information. The chief manager was, in consequence, somewhat less enthusiastic than either his contemporaries or modern scholars in his assessment of the explorer's accomplishments.

Etholen had hoped for two types of information: descriptions of previously unexplored territory to the north and east of existing posts and recommendations on where to establish new posts in order to intercept most efficiently the furs going to Asia through Native trade networks. He was disappointed with respect to new exploration. Zagoskin had extended the company's investigations only slightly up the Kvikhpak and Koyukuk Rivers. All the other areas through which he had passed had been previously examined. In particular, Etholen regretted the explorer's failure to visit Kotzebue Sound, "the chief goal of his expedition" (RCS 25/376:fo. 61, 15 May 1845). Zagoskin did, however, record the geographic coordinates of a number of landmarks, thus facilitating mapping of the region and accomplishing a large part of the task originally assigned to Petr Malakhov in 1839.

Etholen found more value in Zagoskin's recommendations for the trade. Offered as they were by a newcomer to the region, some of the recommendations were ill-advised, with little thought given to their ramifications and consequences for operations in the region as a whole. These elicited admonitions not to meddle in the day-to-day affairs of the posts and forced Etholen to caution his local managers to ignore the explorer's more sweeping orders (RCS 22/166, 213, 471:fo. 124-125, 162v-166, 456-456v, 27 Apr and 10 Aug 1843, 23/473:fo. 382v-383, 13 May 1844). Others of the recommendations, however, were of obvious merit and warranted immediate implementation.

In his initial reports, written in his second month at Mikhailovskii, Zagoskin notified Etholen of the various Native products, such as sea mammal fats, reindeer

skins, and Native-made clothing, which the company should stock at its northern posts in order to garner more of the Native trade. The very next season, 1843, Etholen ordered the annual supply vessel to purchase these things along the Asian coast and at St. Lawrence Island as it made its trading rounds and to deliver them to Mikhailovskii before departing the north.[28] In addition, various types of sea mammal fats were sent to Mikhailovskii from Unalaska and the Pribilof Islands as an experimental trade item[29] (RCS 22/164, 166:fo. 112v-114, 119v-120v, 27 Apr 1843).

Zagoskin's report of his spring, 1843, explorations up the Koyukuk, received in Sitka that autumn, discussed Nulato's position in the trade. It was the explorer's opinion that, while Nulato and the villages of Tokkhakhat, near the mouth of the Koyukuk, and Khotyl'kakat, near the mouth of the Kateel, offered equal commercial advantages, Nulato would always be the company's most important post in the region because it was closer to Mikhailovskii and more easily accessible from Norton Sound. He therefore recommended that Nulato be made the center of the company's trade on the Kvikhpak and its tributaries. Furthermore, he saw no need to cut off the Natives of the lower river from their upriver trading as long as they continued to sell to the company, at favorable prices, most of the furs they obtained there (RCS 23/519:fo. 575-576, 28 Jul 1844).

Etholen did not comment on the latter point, but concurred with Zagoskin's assessment of the role of the Nulato post. In the spring of 1844 he instructed Petr Epifanov, the new manager of Mikhailovskii, to give Nulato his particular attention as the future "center of trade of the whole headwaters of the Kvikhpak River and of the

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[28]This was not a new idea. In the very summer in which Mikhailovskii was established, Teben'kov had orders to purchase reindeer clothing along the Asian coast for resale at the redoubt (RCS 10/235:fo. 130v, 19 May 1833). For reasons unknown, the practice was discontinued after 1834 and not revived until Zagoskin called attention to it.

[29]From its founding, Mikhailovskii had usually received some sea mammal oil and hides from the Pribilof Islands every year, but these were intended as subsistence items for the post, not trade goods.

northern side of America." At the same time, he authorized an increase in personnel there, to as many as ten men, and sent another shallow-draft wooden boat, easier to handle than the last, to facilitate delivery of Nulato-bound cargo (RCS 23/431:fo. 359-360, 13 May 1844).

Etholen ordered other improvements in northern operations in 1844 which may or may not have been based on Zagoskin's recommendations. Concerned about the potential for competition between the post at Ikogmiut on the Kvikhpak and Kolmakovskii redoubt on the Kuskokwim, he urged the manager of the former to look toward the coast for trade, especially that lying south of the mouth of the Kvikhpak. To reduce loss in the transportation of cargo to outlying posts, he recommended that wooden boats replace the easily punctured skin boats in all river transport.[30] With respect to staffing, he asked the manager of Mikhailovskii to reassess the utility of Unalakleet odinochka and, if it was found lacking, to abolish it and use its personnel elsewhere. In general, the chief manager urged a reduction in Russian staff throughout the region. From his perspective, a gradual replacement of Russian laborers with Native workers would mean savings not only in salaries but in the cost and transport of the foodstuffs and manufactured goods which Russian workers considered necessities (RCS 23/431:fo. 360-361v, 13 May 1844).

These measures, designed to put the northern operations on a more profitable footing and render them more efficient, only hinted at the reforms to come. Etholen awaited Zagoskin's return to Sitka in the autumn of 1844 with some impatience, for the explorer had filed no reports of his activities since his trip up the Koyukuk River. The chief manager soon pardoned the delay. Praising the explorer for providing the necessary background information on the easiest means of communication between existing posts, the "insufficiencies and abuses" of current management in the region,

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[30]Skin-covered baidarkas (kayaks) and baidaras (boats), lighter in weight and therefore more easily carried or towed, remained the vessels of choice for individual transportation, for portaging company cargo to Kolmakovskii redoubt, and, apparently, for spring and summer trading trips upriver from Nulato (Netsvetov 1984; Dall 1870).

the course of Native trade, and the best ways to cut off the intercontinental trade, Etholen set about drafting a plan to reorganize company operations from the Nushagak River north to Nulato and beyond. He had the plan roughed out by the end of December and, after a few refinements, was ready to implement it in May 1845.

Under the plan, Aleksandrovskii, the redoubt at the mouth of the Nushagak River, would be downgraded to an odinochka, administered and supplied out of Nikolaevskii redoubt (Kenai) on Cook Inlet. Kolmakovskii redoubt on the Kuskokwim River, previously subordinate to and supplied out of Aleksandrovskii, would now receive supplies and dispatch furs through Mikhailovskii. Out of deference to its long-time manager, Semeon Lukin, the redoubt would not be subordinate to Mikhailovskii, but would report independently to Sitka. The odinochka at Ikogmiut, long in competition with Kolmakovskii redoubt for furs, would be abolished. In its place, a new odinochka, Andreevskaia, would be established some distance down the Kvikhpak near the mouth of the stream Nygyklik (present-day Andreafsky River). The Ikogmiut site would not be totally abandoned, however, for the Russian Orthodox Church was sending a priest, Father Iakov Netsvetov, to open a mission there that very year.[31] Unalakleet would be retained as a fishing station and a way station on the winter trail to Nulato, but its Russian crew was to be replaced with Native workers (RCS 23/703:fo. 553v-554, 23 Dec 1844, 24/270, 304, 308:fo. 314-315v, 356-356v, 361v-363v, 14 and 15 May 1845).

Etholen commissioned Zagoskin to compile detailed instructions for the Kolmakovskii, Andreevskaia, and Nulato posts, the better to coordinate company

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[31]Both Kupreianov and Etholen had written to the Main Office recommending that a resident priest be maintained at one of the northern posts. Kupreianov emphasized the good a priest could do for the Natives, "from whom the company's interests are inseparable" (RCS 18/340:fo. 321, 25 May 1840). The ever-efficient Etholen chose to emphasize benefits to be reaped by the company should a priest "sow the seeds of meekness and peaceableness" among the Natives (RCS 19/147:fo. 187v, 27 Sep 1840). Though company officials immediately approved the plan, they were not overly anxious to provide other than logistical support. It took the Church nearly five years to muster sufficient resources to field the mission.

operations in the region as a whole. The assignment challenged the explorer to transform his diverse observations into concrete, workable management recommendations. Zagoskin rose to the task. Going beyond a set of general policy statements regarding provisioning, discipline, and similar matters, he recommended specific staffing and salary levels for the posts, defined the trade territory to be covered by each, and proposed efficient schedules for the annual round of trading trips and supply runs (RCS 25/376:fo. 60v-89, 15 May 1845).

Of most interest in the context of the present study are the instructions for Nulato. As Zagoskin had recommended in 1843, this post was to be the center of trade for the northern interior. With a staff of eleven men and one woman, it was responsible for the trade of the entire Kvikhpak drainage above the village of Tutago-Igudovskoe (*sic*; Ttutago, near the mouth of present-day Bear Creek), the beginning of the southernmost and most difficult portage to the Unalakleet River (RCS 25/376:fo. 72-72v, 15 May 1845). The instructions also reflect Zagoskin's firm conviction that more furs could be acquired at better prices if company traders went around to Native villages and gathering places rather than merely waiting for the Natives to come to the post (Zagoskin 1956b:182, 1967:184).[32]

Under the guidelines worked out by Zagoskin, trade goods and other cargo were to be dispatched from Mikhailovskii to Nulato by boat in late summer and by sledge, via Unalakleet, during the winter. The fall and winter trade, scarcely mentioned in the instructions, apparently centered at the Nulato post itself. As soon as the Kvikhpak was clear of ice in the spring, however, the majority of the staff was to set out up the river, pushing as far upstream as possible and trying to beat the Koyukuk River Natives to the upriver trade. By July the trading party was to return to Nulato to put up the winter's supply of fish. In August a small party was to go to the

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[32]VanStone (1979:85) interprets this rather ambiguous passage in Zagoskin's published monograph to mean just the opposite. Based upon the instructions Zagoskin compiled for Kolmakovskii, Andreevskaia, and Nulato, however, it appears that he did indeed favor regular visits to Native villages and rendezvous by company traders.

Koyukuk River to trade, returning by September to receive the late summer shipment of cargo. The post manager had some flexibility in the prices he gave for furs. Though in general he was to pay below the tariff established for Mikhailovskii, he could, in the face of competition, pay more as long as the average prices for the season's take did not exceed those listed in the tariff (RCS 25/376:fo. 72-80v, 15 May 1845). A translation of the full text of the Nulato instructions is found in Appendix 2.

His instructions for the reorganization were among Etholen's last orders to Mikhailovskii redoubt. His term as chief manager having expired, he and his family departed for Russia in May 1845, aboard the same vessel as Zagoskin. In its confirmation of the new staffing and salary levels at the northern posts, the Main Office exhorted the new chief manager, Mikhail D. Teben'kov, to carry on the work of his predecessor with regard to exploration and trade in the mainland interior (RCR 16/462:fo. 47-48, 16 Mar 1846).

Expansion of Trade Out of Nulato

The number of beaver pelts shipped out of Nulato in time to catch the 1843 summer transport, some two thousand, was double the take of the previous season. By the end of July, 1843, the post had acquired a thousand more, for an eleven-month total of more than three thousand beaver. Such yields for a single post were unprecedented. Chief Manager Etholen attributed much of the success to Vasilii Deriabin's wise management at Nulato. Convinced that the vast area upon which Nulato drew should produce still greater yields in the future, Etholen admonished Petr Epifanov, incoming manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt, to listen to Deriabin's advice and render him all possible assistance in increasing the trade (RCS 23/431:fo. 359-360, 13 May 1844; Zagoskin 1956b:182, 1967:183).

It was well that he had raised this point. Upon Zagoskin's return and receipt of the posts' reports for fiscal year 1843-44, Etholen learned that the retiring manager of Mikhailovskii, Karl Nordstrem, had paid insufficient attention to Nulato in the season just ended. According to Zagoskin, the late summer and winter transports to

the odinochka had failed to arrive with goods in time for the autumn and spring trades. In consequence, the Nulato returns had been cut in half in comparison with the preceding year (Zagoskin 1956b:182, 1967:184). Zagoskin's spelling out of the timing and content of transports in the instructions he compiled for Nulato would, it was hoped, reduce such problems in the future.

In keeping with his orders, redoubt manager Epifanov tried to spare a man or two to reinforce the crew at Nulato. In the autumn or winter of 1844 he sent to Deriabin the creole Ivan Zakharov, newly arrived in the north that summer (RCS 24/278:fo. 328, 14 May 1845). Deriabin, finding the new man trustworthy, dispatched him an indeterminate distance up the Kvikhpak to trade. Zakharov was apparently less successful than expected. He returned complaining that the Natives had refused to sell him provisions for anything but beads, which he was authorized to exchange only for furs. This was a legacy of Zagoskin's expedition. Zagoskin had carried a personal stock of beads, and other small items highly valued by the Natives, for emergency expenditures. While not technically breaking the rule against exchanging company beads for food and other necessities, he had nonetheless raised Native expectations of such payment. To undo the damage, Chief Manager Teben'kov advised Epifanov to try to convince the Natives that Zagoskin had been a very rich toyon (chief, leader) who dispensed beads as gifts rather than as payment, and that the traders now at Nulato were not toyons and therefore could not be so generous (RCS 26/225:fo. 132-132v, 4 May 1846).

Deriabin had on several occasions requested permission to retire from company service and return to Russia. Raises in pay and appeals to his sense of duty convinced him to remain only temporarily. In the summer of 1845 he departed for Sitka (RCS 16/302:fo. 30-30v, 10 May 1838, 23/476:fo. 386v, 13 May 1844, 26/225:fo. 137v, 4 May 1846). Zakharov, his successor as manager of Nulato, undertook a second trading expedition up the Kvikhpak in 1845-46. This time he ascended the river even farther than Zagoskin had penetrated and enjoyed a very successful trade which swelled the Mikhailovskii export of beaver for the year (RCS 27/325:fo. 463-463v, 12

May 1847, 28/417:fo. 108v, 21 May 1847).

Meanwhile, whether at Teben'kov's special urging or merely because he missed the region in which he had served so long, Deriabin agreed to reassume management of the Nulato post. Teben'kov evidently took advantage of Deriabin's stay in Sitka to obtain firsthand his views on future prospects for trade out of Nulato. Deriabin, like Zagoskin, cited Native reports of rich fur country farther up the Kvikhpak and trade at the Tanna (Tanana) River and "Lake Mintokh." Teben'kov commissioned him to reconnoiter the fur resources and Native population of those places and to ascertain the source of the European goods those people were obtaining. More generally, he urged Deriabin to get acquainted with the inhabitants throughout Nulato's trading region, to try to assume the role of middleman in the trade of Natives among themselves, and to try to inspire in the Natives a demand for items made of cloth. Deriabin was to keep Epifanov, senior manager in the north, informed of all his activities and needs. In turn, Epifanov was to give Deriabin all possible support and free rein in developing the Nulato trade (RCS 26/225, 232:fo. 137v-138, 143v-144, 4 May 1846).

Deriabin returned to Nulato in the autumn of 1846.[33] Over the next four years he undertook "several" (*neskol'ko*) successful trading trips up the Kvikhpak as far as "Lake Mintokh," said to be the river's source. On closer acquaintance with the locality, the Russians came to believe that Mintokh was neither the head of the Kvikhpak nor even a lake, "but only a great overflow of it [the Kvikhpak] formed by the Kvikhpak River and other large rivers flowing into it." From available descrip-

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[33]Zakharov was transferred to Andreevskaia odinochka to serve in place of that new post's intended manager, Andrei Glazunov, who had died at Ikogmiut in March of 1846. In 1847 Teben'kov proposed to Zakharov that he again travel up the Kvikhpak, this time crossing over to the headwaters of the Copper River and descending to Nuchek on Prince William Sound. The chief manager hoped that Zakharov's path would cross that of the creole Ruf Serebrennikov, soon to be dispatched up the Copper bound for the Kvikhpak (RCS 28/417:fo. 108v-109, 21 May 1847). Neither explorer attained his destination. Serebrennikov died by Native hand somewhere on the Copper River in 1848. There is no evidence that Zakharov ever undertook his portion of the expedition.

tions and maps of the day, Mintokh appears to correspond to the western end of the region known today as the Yukon Flats (RCS 33/506:fo. 363v, 16 Jun 1852; Teben'kov 1981:unnumbered chart, Karta severnoi chasti severnago Tikhago Okeana; Zagoskin 1956b:170, 1967:175; cf. Adams 1850-51:118-120).[34]

One of the major purposes of Deriabin's trips up the Kvikhpak was to buy furs at their sources, before they passed into the intercontinental trade. Chief Manager Teben'kov also hoped that Deriabin could reduce the flow of furs to Asia by selling coastal products at Nulato, thereby working himself into the position of middleman between coastal and interior Native peoples. It would, of course, take time to develop these measures sufficiently to divert the entire trade into company hands. Meanwhile, the company continued to lose Kvikhpak drainage furs to Asia by way of Kotzebue Sound, an increasingly important rendezvous in the trade between Alaskan Natives and the Chukchi.

In the years since Zagoskin's failures to reach Kotzebue Sound, the loss of furs by this route had been a constant concern of company officials. When, in the summer of 1843, ice conditions again frustrated the attempts of a company vessel to enter the sound, Chief Manager Etholen had concluded that, even if he did eventually manage to establish a post there, he could not reliably supply it by sea. Anxious nonetheless to keep Alaskan furs from reaching Asia, he ordered the captain of the annual northern transport to try to intercept homeward-bound Chukchi traders and repurchase the furs they carried (RCS 23/429:fo. 352v-353, 12 May 1844).

This solution was less than ideal. First, the company would be both paying more for furs than otherwise necessary and giving the Chukchi the means, in trade

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[34]The name "Mintokh," or "Mynkkhatokh" (Zagoskin 1967:175), appears to be derived from the words for "big lake" in several of the local Athabaskan languages. This place name should not be confused with the names "Minto" and "Minto Lakes" which appear in the Tanana River drainage on modern maps. While the latter two names are derived from the same Athabaskan words, it is clear from the Russian reports and Teben'kov's chart that the name "Mintokh" applied to a place on the Yukon itself, some distance above its juncture with the Tanana.

goods, to continue their fur purchases in the future. Second, it was sometimes difficult for company vessels to intercept the traders en route from Kotzebue Sound. In search of some better answer to the problem, Chief Manager Teben'kov proposed a post in the Diomede Islands to pick up the trade. When no suitable site could be found there, he began to reconsider potential sites in Kotzebue Sound itself. He doubted that the company vessel had tried very hard to enter the sound in 1842 and 1843, but agreed that ice might prevent passage there in some years. Still, he speculated, it might be possible to maintain a post there if it should prove convenient to supply it overland through Nulato. Teben'kov decided to dispatch one more expedition to reconnoiter the overland route (RCS 27/325:fo. 463v-464v, 12 May 1847, 28/418:fo. 109v-110, 21 May 1847).

The surviving account of the expedition raises more questions than it answers regarding the route chosen and the ethnic identity of the Natives met along the way. According to Teben'kov's brief summary, the undertaking was entrusted to Deriabin, who set out from Nulato with nine men in November 1847, traveling "along the Kvikhpak and its tributaries and in another place via a portage through mountains, ravines, and valleys toward the sea." Seventeen days later the party reached the "Maleimiut" settlement called "Kaneliakhta," located on the "Kista" or "Kasta" River (present-day Gisasa River?) and said to be no more than three days' journey from the coastal settlement called Shakhtolik (Shaktoolik, on Norton Sound).

At Kaneliakhta, Deriabin found a large number of Maleimiut gathered for a festival. They received the explorer in an unusually cordial manner that immediately aroused his suspicions. Fearing some sort of attack if he remained in the village, and unable to obtain a guide to proceed farther, Deriabin and his party returned to Nulato (RCS 30/273:fo. 181v-182v, 14 May 1849).

Deriabin's failure to locate a convenient route to Kotzebue Sound was quite naturally a disappointment to company officials, but other, more pressing matters had temporarily dampened their desire for further explorations in that direction. If the company was to increase its share of the Kvikhpak drainage furs, it would have to

rely upon the Nulato post to cultivate the local Native traders and find additional ways to strengthen its competitive position in the region.

CHAPTER 4
THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY REACHES THE YUKON

The Russian-American Company was only too aware that it was not the only government-chartered trading firm operating in the north. Just to the east lay the American possessions of Great Britain, the preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. To all appearances, the boundary between Russian and British territory had been settled under the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825. In southeastern Alaska, the main area of contention at the time of the treaty negotiations, the Russians had retained their claim to the islands of the Alexander Archipelago and a narrow strip of the mainland coast stretching from Portland Canal to Mount St. Elias. From Mount St. Elias the formalized boundary extended due north along the 141st meridian, all the way to the Arctic Ocean. One clause of the treaty, however, had worried the Russian firm from the outset. It reserved to the British in perpetuity the right of free navigation along all rivers which crossed Russian territory in their course from the British possessions to the Pacific Ocean (Barratt 1981:229-230).

The company found its apprehensions over this clause substantiated in 1834, when the Hudson's Bay Company dispatched a vessel to establish a post up the Stikine River, a major route of communication between the southeastern Alaskan coast and the British mainland interior. The post's purpose was to intercept the "British" land mammal furs which the Russians were beginning to receive in quantity by that route. Standing on a technicality, the Russian-American Company refused the vessel passage, but, lacking the full backing of its government in the diplomatic furor that followed, the company ultimately lost its case. Under the settlement negotiated in 1839, the Russian firm was forced to grant its British rival a renewable ten-year lease to the entire mainland coastal strip between Portland Canal and Cape Spencer. The lease, which went into effect on 1 June 1840 (N.S.), ceded to the Hudson's Bay Company all rights of trade along that section of the mainland coast and cut the Russians off

from a promising source of land mammal furs (Okun 1951:217-220; Tikhmenev 1978:169-173).

The Russian-American Company was still smarting from this diplomatic setback as it redoubled its efforts to tap the fur resources of the Alaskan mainland interior in the early 1840s. Encouraged by the seemingly limitless trade potential of the region, company officials were gratified by the knowledge that there, at least, the British had no claim. True, a few English-made trade goods had been filtering into the northern interior, but, as far as anyone knew of that uncharted land, a mountain range, a divide between the Pacific and Arctic drainages, separated the Russian and British mainland possessions. Such a geographic barrier could certainly be expected to impede further British expansion toward the west, while the great Kvikhpak River promised the Russian traders relatively easy penetration far to the east, perhaps to the British boundary. The company's directorate found little reason to expect significant British competition from that quarter in the near future. Yet even then the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company were laying plans to penetrate the vast river drainage which Natives reported to lie west of the divide, a drainage the British would come to know as the Yukon.

Background Information

By virtue of its royal charter, granted in 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company claimed all rights to the fur trade of the Hudson Bay drainage. The Montreal-based traders of New France, already well established in the St. Lawrence River valley, fiercely opposed this monopolistic pretension. Frustrated in their attempts to drive the British from the shores of Hudson Bay, they extended their trade inland even to Lake Winnipeg and the lower Saskatchewan River in an effort to divert furs from the coast. Great Britain's conquest of New France in 1763 did little to dampen the competition, for a host of independent British entrepreneurs quickly took up the French trade network. These small operators embarked upon many a joint venture to compete against the traders on the bay. The most successful and enduring of the ventures was

the North West Company, formed in 1779.

In the mid 1770s the Hudson's Bay Company, long content to trade on the coast, began to establish posts inland to challenge the flourishing interlopers. The Montreal traders always managed to stay one step ahead, pushing west beyond the Rocky Mountains and northwest to the Athabasca drainage and Mackenzie River valley, but the lengthening supply lines and ruinous competition eventually took their toll. In 1821 the North West Company, its partners threatening to go their separate ways, negotiated a merger with its long-time rival. By the end of that year the reorganized Hudson's Bay Company held exclusive trade rights in all of what is now western Canada (Rich 1967).

Through the years of intense competition, trading posts had proliferated and some areas had been severely overtrapped and overhunted. The merger heralded a period of consolidation and redirection of the trade. George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's new Northern Department, reduced staff, closed redundant posts, ordered conservation measures where fur resources had been depleted, and promoted expansion into regions still relatively untapped. One of the areas to which he turned his attention was the drainage of the Mackenzie River (Karamanski 1983:8-10).

The Mackenzie River trade had been the preserve of the North West Company. The firm established its first post on the Mackenzie, near the outlet of Great Slave Lake, in 1796, seven years after Alexander Mackenzie's initial exploration of the great river. Posts along the river multiplied quickly in the period 1801 through 1804 as a group of disaffected "Nor'westers," organized as the XY Company, sought to appropriate the Mackenzie trade, but by 1805 the rivals had become reconciled and the Mackenzie River posts were reduced to three: Fort Good Hope near the mouth of Hare Indian River, Fort Norman near the mouth of Great Bear River, and "Forks" Fort at the Mackenzie's junction with the Liard (Karamanski 1983:15-16). A decade later, economic considerations forced the North West Company to close even these. Apprehensive lest the Hudson's Bay traders take advantage of the withdrawal to enter

the region themselves, the company continued to maintain a small presence in the region to 1821, first sending a seasonal trader, then reopening several of its posts (Karamanski 1983:18-19). These measures were more precautionary than necessary. The Mackenzie River region's extreme remoteness from the centers of supply sheltered it well against the worst abuses of the competitive trade.

Governor Simpson moved quickly to resecure the Mackenzie trade. Within a year of the merger, the Hudson's Bay Company had constructed a new post at Mackenzie River Forks. Soon known as Fort Simpson, this station became the administrative center for the Mackenzie River District. In 1823 the company reestablished Fort Good Hope, the Nor'westers' northernmost post on the river. Though company officers initially chose a site about a hundred miles downstream from the original station, the difficulty of shipping supplies the extra distance had by 1827 induced them to return the post to the mouth of Hare Indian River. Simpson also ordered that trade contacts be extended west into the Mackenzie Mountains. The senior officers at Fort Simpson duly dispatched several small expeditions in this direction (Karamanski 1983:39-42, 45-46, 50-56; Krech 1976:217).

By 1829 Governor Simpson had begun to consider the southwestern tributaries of the Mackenzie as potential routes to the Pacific Slope. He hoped that expansion in this direction would enable the company to intercept furs passing from the interior through Native middlemen to Russian-American Company establishments on the Pacific coast. Within the next decade, explorations out of Fort Simpson extended beyond the Liard River to the headwaters of the Stikine, a river of the Pacific drainage. When, in 1839, the Hudson's Bay Company gained control of the coastal trade through the above-mentioned lease agreement with the Russians, such indirect routes to the Pacific were no longer important. Abandoning its hard-won foothold in that country, the company redirected its interior explorations toward the unknown lands of the northwest (Karamanski 1983:87-156).

The discovery of the Colville River did much to encourage the Hudson's Bay Company to extend its search for furs in this new direction. In 1837 the company,

perhaps hoping to curry favor in government circles, outfitted a party under Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson to continue the Arctic coastal surveys begun for the British Admiralty by John Franklin in 1819-22 and 1825-27. In their first season of work, Dease and Simpson traced the one section of coast west of the Mackenzie which still remained unmapped, a 160-mile stretch between Return Reef (Return Islands) and Point Barrow. Not far beyond Return Reef, they sighted and named the mouth of the Colville River, whose considerable breadth led the explorers to speculate that the river flowed a great distance through the fur-rich interior before reaching the coast. This report greatly excited the company's officers in London. Thinking that the newly discovered stream might prove the key to another Mackenzie River District, they ordered Governor Simpson and the Council of the Northern Department to explore the country lying between the Colville and Mackenzie and to establish posts there if the region appeared promising (Coates 1980:44-46; Karamanski 1983:159-160; Morton [1939]:680-684).

Robert Campbell was assigned the search for a route to the headwaters of the Colville. In 1840 he set out up the West Branch of the Liard River to seek a large river which, by Native reports, lay not far to the north. Pushing up the Frances River, a northern tributary of the Liard, to the waters of Frances Lake and beyond, he succeeded in crossing the divide into the Yukon drainage. There he found the large, northwestward-flowing river of which the Natives had spoken. He named it the Pelly (Coates 1980:48-49; Karamanski 1983:169-175).

Over the next decade, the company was repeatedly frustrated in its efforts to open this country to trade. The difficulties of transporting trade goods and supplies over the route Campbell had pioneered and the scarcity of local subsistence resources hampered company operations at Frances Lake and the upper Pelly, and delayed expansion downriver. Not until 1848 did Campbell succeed in opening Fort Selkirk at the junction of the Lewes (upper Yukon) and Pelly Rivers, a site favored by Governor Simpson from Campbell's first report of it in 1843. The post did not, however, prove to be the key to further expansion. Subject to the same supply problems as the other

posts in the region, it also faced intense competition from well-established Chilkat Tlingit traders who brought western manufactured goods up from the coast. When the jealous Chilkats pillaged Fort Selkirk in August of 1852, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to withdraw from the upper river rather than reopen such an unprofitable station (Coates 1980:69-77; Karamanski 1983:176-200, 214-222, 236-244, 270-274).

Another potential route west to the Colville drainage was Peel River, discovered and named by John Franklin in 1826. At the time of the discovery, the Mackenzie River District had lacked the resources to explore the river and open it to trade. Now the Hudson's Bay Company sought to rectify that oversight. In the summer of 1839 John Bell set out from Fort Good Hope under orders to examine the Peel River to its source, locate a site for a trading post, and ascertain whether there was some convenient route of communication between the Peel and the Colville.

Bell and his party returned to report favorably upon the region's potential. They had ascended the Rat River, a small tributary of the Peel which, according to local Natives, led to a portage across the mountains (McDougall Pass). Traveling as far as the beginning of the portage, the explorers had met and traded with a large party of Natives who had come from the west, the "Tramontane Loucheux." Encouraged by these results, Bell's superiors dispatched him to establish a post on the lower Peel River in the summer of 1840 (Isbister 1845:336, 338-339; Karamanski 1983:158-159, 163-167).

The "Tramontane Loucheux," likely the Upper Porcupine River band of Kutchin, were no strangers to the fur trade. The portage was already an established rendezvous at which the people from beyond the mountains bartered furs to the Peel River Kutchin for manufactured goods which the latter obtained directly or indirectly from Hudson's Bay Company posts farther up the Mackenzie. As Bell was soon to learn, the tramontane Kutchin in turn had extensive trade ties with peoples still farther west from whom they obtained most of the furs they brought to Peel River (Karamanski 1983:202-203).

Information is sparse regarding the antiquity, extent, and routes of participation

in the fur trade by Athabaskans of the upper Yukon drainage prior to the establishment of a Hudson's Bay Company post in their own country. As elsewhere on the Yukon, we lack well-dated archaeological evidence of the early trade, and early explorers' accounts are few. Based as they are on scattered historical references and projections of ethnohistorical data backward in time, any reconstructions of the spatial patterns of the early fur trade in this region are necessarily tentative.

The earliest reference to this branch of the trade, indeed the most substantive reference before the 1840s, appears in John Franklin's account of his explorations of the Arctic coast west of the Mackenzie delta in 1826. At Herschel Island, local Eskimos told Franklin that they regularly exchanged furs, seal skins, and sea mammal oil for iron, knives, and beads which they obtained primarily from Eskimos living to the west, but also from the "Mountain Indians"[35] who descended to the coast by way of a river emptying into the sea opposite the island (Firth River?). Observing that the trade goods in the Eskimos' possession were neither of British manufacture nor like those sold by the Hudson's Bay Company, the explorer concluded that they must have come from the Russians, but he could only puzzle over reports that the Mountain Indians had firearms. To the best of his knowledge, Russian traders were prohibited from supplying guns to the Natives (Franklin 1828:130, 180-181).

From where did these Mountain Indians obtain their trade goods? Franklin's insistence that the goods were not British in origin rules out the Hudson's Bay Company posts of the Mackenzie drainage as the source.[36] According to the stories

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[35]Reconstructions of nineteenth-century Kutchin regional band territories suggest that these people were Crow Flats or Chandalar Kutchin, the groups who ranged closest to the Firth River drainage (Slobodin 1981:516 fig. 1). The term "Mountain Indian" itself is of little help in identifying this group, for it may have been the traders' descent to the Arctic coast through the mountains more than the topographic character of their homeland that prompted Franklin's interpreter to give them this name.

[36]Though this suggests that the trade between the tramontane and Peel River Kutchin, observed by Bell in 1839, was not yet well established, such contacts must already have been developing. As early as 1830, furs obtained from the Upper Porcupine River and

repeated by Franklin's guide, the Mountain Indians obtained their Russian goods from coastal Eskimos still farther to the west. Reportedly, large parties of these Indians annually came down to an inlet which the guide made out to be somewhere beyond Return Reef toward the southwest. In the "warm contests" (battles?) which often arose between the Indians and the Eskimo inhabitants of the area, the latter were frequently worsted and lost their property to the visitors, who subsequently resold their spoils to the Eskimos at Herschel Island (Franklin 1828:175).[37]

Unsatisfactorily explained by this story is the alleged possession of firearms by the Indians. While Franklin never saw the guns, he was told on more than one occasion that the Indians had them, and we, like he, cannot dismiss out of hand the possibility that such rumors were true. There is evidence that American traders sold firearms to the Eskimos of Bering Strait for a season or two around 1820, but, by all available historical accounts, guns were thereafter absent from the coastal and intercontinental trade until American whalers began to introduce them in the early to mid 1850s (Bockstoce 1995:185; Ray 1975b). Consequently, if the Mountain Indians obtained their manufactured goods solely from the western coastal Eskimos, we might well wonder how it was that the Indians possessed these rare trade items while the Eskimos of the Arctic coast, by all accounts much more directly involved in the coastal and intercontinental trade, apparently did not.

Later historical and ethnographic accounts identify two other routes by which

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Crow Flats Kutchin constituted an important portion of the returns of Fort Good Hope (Krech 1976:217-218, citing HBC Fort Good Hope Journals).

[37]If this was the Indians' sole source of Russian goods, we must question whether they might truly be called participants in the fur trade at this early date. Missing from the story is any indication that the Indians played out the role of the fur trade middleman by retrading the furs and other products obtained at Herschel Island for still more Russian goods. The implication is that they either kept the Herschel Island products for themselves or traded them to other Native groups solely for other native products.

the western Kutchin commonly received Russian trade goods. One stretched to the west down the Yukon, through the Koyukon Athabaskans. By the 1840s the Lower Yukon and lower Koyukuk River Koyukon were active middlemen in the fur trade between the upper middle Yukon and the shores of Norton and Kotzebue Sounds (Murray 1910; Zagoskin 1956b:165-167, 175, 1967:171-172, 178-179). We do not know the intensity of Koyukon involvement in the fur trade in earlier years. There is, however, reason to suppose that, before the early 1830s, when the Russian-American Company began to extend its trade to the Kuskokwim River and the shores of Bering Strait, the Koyukon's chief and most reliable source of Russian goods would have been the intercontinental trade. Consequently, if the Koyukon were already trading furs from the western Kutchin in the early 1820s, the types of Russian goods they could offer in exchange must have differed little from those then being offered by the western coastal Eskimos. If it is unlikely that the Mountain Indians had obtained their firearms from the Eskimos, it is equally improbable that they had received them through the Koyukon.

The other major avenue of trade stretched to the south, through the intervening Athabaskan peoples toward the Russian posts on Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound and the Chilkat Tlingit traders of Lynn Canal (McClellan 1950, 1975:501-518; McKennan 1965:25; Murray 1910). Some small trickle of trade goods from the Russian posts near Kasilof (the short-lived Georgievskoe, established 1787), and at Kenai and Nuchek (established 1791 and 1793, respectively) could have begun reaching the western Kutchin even before 1800, but it is not likely that those posts were the source of the Mountain Indians' firearms. As Franklin had thought, the Russian-American Company, the sole operator on Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound after 1799, did indeed prohibit the sale of guns to the Natives, and it was apparently quite successful in enforcing this policy in south central Alaska until about

the 1830s.[38]

Among the islands of the Alexander Archipelago of southeastern Alaska, however, the company did not have the strength to control the trade to such a degree. There, where foreign (non-Russian) seaborne traders had been purchasing sea otter pelts from the Tlingit since the late 1780s, the Natives had access to manufactured goods of all types, including, from at least 1800, plentiful stocks of firearms and ammunition supplied by the Americans (Tikhmenev 1978:61-62). Even in periods when foreign vessels were successfully excluded from Russian colonial waters, the Natives of southeastern Alaska continued to secure all manner of goods from traders operating just south of the territorial boundary.

The Chilkat Tlingit of the head of Lynn Canal were at first but marginal participants in the coastal fur trade because their waters were not particularly rich in sea otters. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, however, the sea otter populations had declined drastically throughout the region and both the trading vessels and the resident Russians increasingly sought the pelts of land mammals to fill out their cargos (Howay 1973:60, 104). The Chilkat and other mainland Tlingit who controlled the routes of access to the continental interior soon became powerful middlemen in the coast-interior fur trade (McClellan 1975:7-8). These were the historical beginnings of the strong Chilkat trading presence which Campbell found at the forks of the Lewes and Pelly in the late 1840s. We do not know how soon a

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[38]Though company officers had for some years made note of various "English" trifles in circulation among the Natives of south central and southwestern Alaska (Liapunova and Fedorova 1979:50; Khlebnikov 1994:45; RCS 6/30:fo. 268v, 4 Mar 1829), only in the early 1830s did they begin to notice English guns in the possession of the Tanaina who had dealings with the post at Kenai. The Tanaina reported that they obtained the guns, as well as copper coins and beads "not of Russian import," from the Copper River Galtsan (Upper Ahtna) at Nutatlgat (Batzulnetas), who in turn received them from tribes who traded with people living in forts (Kari 1985:105; Wrangell 1970:9). Chief Manager Ferdinand Wrangell believed that the foreign items had been traded inland by the Chilkat Tlingit, who obtained them from American vessels on the Northwest Coast. It seems equally possible that, by the 1830s, some of the items were coming from the Mackenzie drainage through Kutchin and other Athabaskan middlemen.

network of secondary, Athabaskan middlemen began to carry the coastal trade as far as the western Kutchin. We can only suggest that, barring trade with the Hudson's Bay Company posts of the Mackenzie drainage, this is the most likely route by which the "Mountain Indians" could have received firearms as early as the mid 1820s.

Thus does Franklin's brief mention of the "Mountain Indian" trade suggest that, even in the 1820s, some of the western Kutchin were already participants in a network of fur trade relations which stretched from the shores of the north Pacific to the Arctic coast and from Bering Strait to the western slopes of the Rockies. By 1830, if not before, those trade ties extended beyond the Rockies into the Mackenzie drainage as well (Krech 1976:217-218). John Bell's Peel River post did not introduce the tramontane Kutchin to the fur trade. It did, however, provide them a closer source of manufactured goods than had previously been available.

Establishment of Fort Yukon

The Peel River post, later named Fort McPherson, was to serve as a base from which the Hudson's Bay Company could extend its explorations and trade westward toward the Colville. It was not long before John Bell, senior officer at the post he had founded, began to turn his eyes in that direction. By the summer of 1841, he had learned enough of the local trade patterns to realize that many of the furs purchased at Peel River were coming from beyond the mountains through a series of Native middlemen. Convinced that he would greatly increase the post's returns if he could open direct trade relations with the remote peoples who produced the furs, he sought some way to establish contact.

In the summer of 1842 Bell set out from Peel River with several subordinates and a "Rat Indian" (probably Upper Porcupine River Kutchin) guide to locate a convenient route into the Colville drainage. The explorers made a long, difficult portage through the Richardson Mountains and descended the westward-flowing Bell River to its confluence with the larger Porcupine River. They had traveled only a short distance down the Porcupine before their guide refused to lead them farther,

declaring that the Porcupine's mouth was so distant that cold weather would overtake them on the return trip. Concerned that a prolonged journey would prevent him from returning to Peel River in time to oversee the autumn dispatch of furs, Bell reluctantly turned back.

Though the western rivers seemed promising, Bell had been discouraged by the arduous sixty-mile portage required to reach them. There were, however, Native reports of an easier communication by way of a series of lakes. In the summer of 1843 he dispatched a small party to verify these rumors. A Rat Indian guide led the expedition up the Rat River over the route Bell had traced in 1839, but at the lakes which marked the river's head and the beginning of the portage, this guide, too, found it inconvenient to continue. The explorers returned without crossing the divide (Coates 1980:47-48; Karamanski 1983:202-209).

By 1845, Bell had abandoned hope of finding a convenient water route through the mountains. Resigning himself to the difficulties of the portage, he set out in May of that year to retrace his earlier track to the Bell River, five days' march overland from the Peel. He pushed on beyond the terminus of his 1842 explorations, descending the Porcupine to its confluence with a much larger river which local Natives called the Yukon. The trader spent a week exploring the Yukon near the mouth of the Porcupine, hoping in vain to establish contacts with the local inhabitants. He found only an old woman and a young boy; most of the others, he understood, had departed downriver to trade.

Bell had already turned back up the Porcupine when he met three Yukon River men. They assured the trader that their country abounded in fur bearers, fish, and game. Though they reported little trade in their own area, they had heard of white men farther downstream who ascended the river from the sea in boats and dispensed manufactured goods very liberally. Furthermore, Bell learned, Eskimos ascended the Yukon from the west to trade with the "distant Musquash Indians" (?), annual visitors at Peel River. To Bell's eye, most of the trade goods in the possession of Natives

along the Porcupine were of "Russian" origin (Coates 1980:48; Karamanski 1983:222-224).

In a letter report to Governor Simpson regarding the results of his 1845 explorations, Bell tempered high praise for trade prospects in the new region with a sober assessment of the difficulties of transport across the mountains (Coates 1980:48). Simpson, confident that the transportation problems could be overcome, proceeded with plans to open new posts in the western drainage. He dispatched Alexander Hunter Murray to the Mackenzie River District to assist in the projected expansion.

When Murray arrived at Peel River he found the westward expansion already underway. Chief Trader Bell had established a small post, La Pierre House, at the far end of the portage through the mountains. It was to serve primarily as a way station to facilitate travel and transport between Peel River and points west. Murray's assignment was to extend the company's operations all the way to the Yukon.

Throughout the spring of 1847 the men at Peel River and La Pierre were busy with the many preparations necessary to assure the proposed post a successful start in the new region. By June all was ready. Murray and his crew set out on foot from Peel River to La Pierre House, then continued by boat down to the confluence of the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers, which they reached on 25 June. The following day, with a local Native as guide, Murray searched the banks of the Yukon for a suitable building site. He selected an elevated ridge along the river's north bank, about three miles above the mouth of the Porcupine. Though not well supplied with building timber, the ridge appeared to be less prone to flooding than the surrounding lowlands and seemed somewhat protected from river erosion by a nearby island which deflected the main force of the current toward the south. Within a few days the traders had erected a weather-proof temporary storehouse on the site and on 1 July 1847 Murray was ready to commence "regular operations" at Fort Yukon (Murray 1910:28-54).

Murray experienced little difficulty in opening trade with the local Natives. He estimated that ninety men, divided into three bands, inhabited territories in the

immediate vicinity of Fort Yukon. One-third of these, accompanied by their families, had called upon the trader on 28 June, just three days after his arrival on the river,[39] and within a month the remaining men had all visited the post at least once. Murray did a brisk business in furs as well as "country produce," the moose hides, meat, fish, and other local products needed to maintain the new station through the winter.

Indeed, so eagerly did local Natives participate that, though Murray would purchase only the most valuable furs for beads and guns, his meager supplies of these most highly desired trade items were exhausted by 27 August, and by the end of October he was nearly out of even the less desired goods. All that remained in the storehouse in quantity were ammunition and cloth, the latter because the Natives, considering their own skin clothing to be vastly superior, could scarcely be induced to accept textiles in trade. A few Natives left furs "in cache" at the store against goods expected in the next shipment of supplies. The majority took their furs away. Though they promised to return when the post's store had been resupplied, Murray suspected that they would trade many of those furs downriver, to Natives who had alternative sources of imported goods (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 12-13, 19v, 21v; Murray 1910:46-49, 56, 68, 92-94).

Murray's situation only worsened with the arrival of his trading "outfit" for fiscal year 1848-49. Early in June of 1848 the trader had departed with most of his men for La Pierre House to deliver the first year's take in furs and receive the shipment of goods and supplies for the coming season. By 1 July local Natives were gathering at Fort Yukon in anticipation of Murray's return. Most of the men brought furs, so many that assistant postmaster Alexander Mackenzie began to doubt that the new outfit would suffice to pay for them all. His apprehensions were well founded. Murray arrived with the outfit on 4 July. By the next day he had disposed of all but

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[39]For a Kutchin (Gwich'in) oral tradition concerning Murray's initial meeting with three local leaders, Dishizeeti', Shahnyaati', and Shahvyaa, see Mishler (1982:8-10). Elijah John of Fort Yukon, born in 1893, related it to Mishler in the Gwich'in language in 1976.

three pounds of beads, which he held in reserve for a more distant chief, the Crow Flats Kutchin called "Letter Carrier." On 6 July, with seventy-two men still waiting at the fort to trade, Murray sold the last of his guns, and by 8 July, when he settled with Letter Carrier and his party, he had exhausted the year's supply of beads as well (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 1, 2v-3v).

Murray did his best to satisfy the "principal men" first, though even among these he had to ration the beads in order for each to have a share. He tried to convince the remaining Natives to yield their furs in exchange for other items. Not all could be thus satisfied. The trader noted with resignation the considerable quantity of beaver and marten skins which the Natives held back to exchange downriver for goods more to their liking (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 3v-4, 5v-6, 1848-49b:35).

Only in mid December did Murray receive news that raised his spirits. In the winter mail packet from La Pierre House came an invoice which indicated that Fort Yukon's 1849-50 outfit would finally include an adequate supply of beads as well as a somewhat larger allotment of guns. The trader quickly relayed this information to local Natives in the hope that it would induce them to hold their furs until the outfit should arrive in July. Those who did were not disappointed. In his third year of operations on the Yukon, Murray was not only able to buy up all the furs offered, but ended the year with nearly six pounds of beads in reserve. The 1849-50 outfit restored the Natives' waning confidence in the ability of Fort Yukon to supply their needs in the trade (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 15-15v, 1849-50a:fo. 1v, 26v).

Not all the Natives within trading distance of Fort Yukon welcomed the opening of the post as readily as did the local population. Initially opposed to the Hudson's Bay Company's presence in the region were three groups who sought to protect their lucrative positions as middlemen in the Yukon River trade. The "Rat Indians" (Crow Flats and Upper Porcupine River Kutchin), who lived on the Porcupine River, had since 1840 traded Yukon River furs at the Peel River post. The "Gens du fou" (Han), whose territory lay upriver from Fort Yukon, were links in a trade network which extended from the Yukon south to the coast. Finally, the

Athabaskans who lived downriver from the fort, the "Tannin-Kootchin" (Tanana River people) and "Teytseh-Kootchin" (Koyukon), regularly bartered furs from the area's inhabitants for resale to the downriver Russians (Murray 1910:55, 82-83). By the end of August, 1847, representatives of all three interest groups had visited Fort Yukon, the Crow Flats Kutchin and Han in considerable numbers.

Murray was well aware that these Native traders had reason to resent his presence. At the same time, he believed that even they would find advantage in dealing with the post should he ever receive a sufficient stock of trade goods. He consequently tried his best to keep all channels of trade open while remaining vigilant for signs of discord or ill intent among the Natives. What worried Murray most during his first year at Fort Yukon was not the potential for conflict with his Native rivals, but the possibility of confrontation with a rival whom he could never hope to win over through trade: an agent of the Russian-American Company.

THE RUSSIAN "THREAT"

Alexander Murray had two good reasons to expect a confrontation with the Russian traders. First, he was trespassing on their territory. By his own calculations, he was some six degrees of longitude west of the 141st meridian, the boundary between Russian and British lands established by the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1825 (Murray 1910:54, 75). Second, it seemed highly likely that the trespass would quickly be detected. If the Natives were to be believed, the Russians were much more active on the river, both below and above Fort Yukon, than anyone in the Hudson's Bay Company had suspected. Murray, however, was not one to scruple against a little poaching if he thought it might profit the company. Keeping a weather eye out for a boatload of Russians, he resolved to carry on with the construction of Fort Yukon until he should receive orders to the contrary.

It was from downstream that Murray expected the first challenge to his presence, for the local Natives were continually calling his attention to the Russians' activities there. As nearly as he could determine from Native reports, the Russians

had a large fort on the coast at the mouth of a river flowing into Norton Sound. From the coastal fort they proceeded upstream, then portaged through the mountains to a second, very large river which, Murray supposed, joined the Yukon from the southwest. In each of the previous three summers, a Russian trading party had ascended the Yukon from the mouth of this southwest tributary,[40] and in just the previous season had ascended to within a short distance below the site Murray had now chosen for his post. This summer of 1847, the Natives assured him, the Russians were planning to explore the river to its source and would surely pass Fort Yukon on the way (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 2; Murray 1910:45, 70-73).

This last piece of intelligence caused Murray some uneasy moments until late July, when his interpreter reported that the Russians had already come and gone, unable to explore the upper river that season for want of a suitable boat (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 7-8; Murray 1910:68). This was very welcome news on two counts. First, it meant at least a year's postponement of the inevitable meeting with the Russians. More importantly, it gave Murray reason to hope that he might yet secure the major share of the Yukon trade. With the Russians on the river only once each summer, and so briefly, he would have no competition for the greater part of the year. He might even find a way to prevent the local Natives from meeting his rivals during that short annual visit (Murray 1910:70, 93).

In late November of 1847, Murray received news of the Russians which again deflated his hopes. According to some "Russian Indians" who arrived to buy up furs

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[40]Though he soon changed his mind, Murray initially accepted the theory, then current in the Hudson's Bay Company, that the Yukon and Colville Rivers were one and the same. It is evident that Murray, in keeping with a belief that the Yukon must somewhere turn sharply north, toward the Arctic Ocean and the known mouth of the Colville, at first considered the Koyukuk River to be the lower course of the Yukon and identified the lower Yukon itself as a major southwest tributary of the great river (Murray 1910:76, 78 n. 2). Considered from this perspective, Murray's description, in general outline, corresponds fairly well with what is known of Russian supply lines to the middle Yukon in the 1840s. There is no reason to suggest, as does L. J. Burpee (Murray 1910:73 n. 1), that the description refers to posts on the Kuskokwim and Nushagak Rivers.

around Fort Yukon, his rivals had undertaken some new construction at the mouth of the "southwest tributary" and were wintering there. Not only were the Russians trading goods very cheaply, but they reportedly blamed Murray's post for high Native mortality over the previous summer and offered medical treatment. Murray immediately refuted any claim that his presence in the region was causing Native deaths and cursed the Russians for trying to incite the Natives against him. He was much less successful in countering promises of cheap and plentiful trade goods, for his own post was by then destitute of all but the least desired merchandise. If he was now to face Russian competition year round, he complained to his superiors, he would at least like to have the means to compete (Murray 1910:69-70, 93).

As he compiled his reports in the spring of 1848, Murray mulled over the company's future prospects in the Yukon trade. He still lacked official clarification of his position with regard to the Russians. It had occurred to him that the Hudson's Bay Company might obtain a lease to the region, as it had done along the Northwest Coast, but if that was not to be, he was perfectly willing to continue in trespass as long as he could get away with it. He could not advocate a proliferation of posts in the region. Even should the company obtain a territorial lease, he was sure neither that local resources could support multiple posts nor that the company could find an economical means to supply them. On the other hand, his own post, given sufficient trade goods, might still offer the Russians a few years of stiff competition. He had nearly convinced himself that he would have no summer visits from his downstream rivals. Their nearest post (Nulato) stood some eight days' travel below Fort Yukon, and, from what Murray had heard of the intervening stretch of river, distance and the difficulties of navigation would likely continue to keep the Russians from his door (HBC 1847-48b:18-19; Murray 1910:95-96).

The trader was interrupted in putting these thoughts to paper by the arrival of a party of Han Athabaskans from upriver. They brought news that sent him into fresh paroxysms of anxiety: the Russians knew of his presence, had discovered a new and easy route to the upper Yukon, and were that very summer planning to send a cannon-

equipped boat to visit his post. Until then, Murray had all but discounted the possibility of a Russian challenge from upstream. True, there were Native reports that Russian traders had visited both the headwaters and one of the upper tributaries of the Yukon several seasons back, but they could not be said to have frequented the region. Should they now succeed in sending a boat with a cannon, they could descend to, and threaten, Fort Yukon within a matter of days (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 38; Murray 1910:73, 96-98).

Over the next two weeks, all at the post were caught up in preparations for the spring trip to La Pierre House. There were furs to pack, accounts to tally, dispatches to prepare, but through it all, Murray kept one eye to the horizon and wondered how he should behave when the Russians arrived. By 5 June 1848, the day of his departure, he still had not decided upon a definite course of action. Reluctantly, he left the post in the charge of his assistant and hoped that no Russians would appear before he had returned with instructions from his superiors (Murray 1910:98, 101).

He found little in the way of advice awaiting him at La Pierre House. Murdoch McPherson, the officer in charge of the Mackenzie River District, considered it beyond his own authority to issue orders in a matter which, if poorly handled, could lead to international complications. He could only urge the trader to try to hold his ground until he received further instructions from Governor Simpson (HBC 1847-48b:32). It was left to Murray to figure out how he was to accomplish this.

The problem did not trouble him long. On his return to Fort Yukon he found no waiting Russian delegation, and by August he had received word that his rivals had come only a little farther up the river than previously. Of the upriver Russians, there was no news whatsoever before freeze-up. Much to the trader's surprise and relief, the summer had passed without incident (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 5v, 1848-49b:35).

By the end of the following summer, 1849, the last of Murray's fears of a Russian challenge had evaporated. Throughout the preceding year he had heard little of his rivals. Though the local Kutchin did not let him forget that they had an alternative market for their furs downriver from Fort Yukon, they no longer brought

him reports of Russian plans to ascend the river to its head. Rumors of Russian activities on the far upper river had also subsided. According to the most recent reports, a quarrel between a Russian trading party and a group of Han Athabaskans or "some of their friends" had ended in the death of five Russians.[41] As the Han now declared their intention to cut all trade ties with the Russians to the south, future Russian encroachment from that direction seemed unlikely (HBC 1849-50a:fo. 1, 3v). Murray's new assurance was, however, based upon more than a sudden dearth of rumor. In August of 1849 he was surrounded by a stout fort which was rapidly nearing completion, his post was the center of a growing trade network, and he had for the first time received a sufficient stock of trade goods to see him through a full year. He now felt himself too well entrenched to be driven out as easily as he might have been in his first shaky year of operation.

The trader's growing confidence was soon put to the test. In mid August two Natives arrived at Fort Yukon bearing "strange rumors." Among other things, they had heard that the Russians trading on the river that summer had left a letter to be delivered to Murray. The letter, reportedly sent by the Russian "master of the boat," arrived three days later. According to the Native who brought it, Murray's rivals had been making inquiries about his establishment and spoke of coming there, but could not manage it that season. Of the letter's content, the Native knew nothing.

Faced with his first concrete evidence that the Russians were aware of his presence, Murray did not panic. The Native's report, and the mere fact that the Russians had sent a letter rather than coming themselves, only supported his belief that his rivals lacked the means to ascend as far as Fort Yukon. He turned his attention to the letter itself. It was just a note, really, penciled in Russian, a language that Murray could not read. Though its very brevity and informal appearance inclined the trader to discount it, he duly sent it on in the November mail for his superiors' interpreta-

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[41]Several details of the Han stories correspond fairly well with what is known of the fate of the Serebrennikov expedition, four of whose members were killed somewhere on the Copper River in the summer of 1848 (Doroshin 1866:378-381; Ketz 1983:35-41).

tion. The original went to John Rae, officer in charge of the Mackenzie River District at Fort Simpson, a copy to Governor George Simpson himself (HBC 1849:fo. 486, 1849-50a:fo. 4-4v, 1849-50b:44).

Murray did not wish to alarm his superiors, for their overreaction could be detrimental to the future development of the trade. Just recently, he had received a letter from John Bell advising him to move Fort Yukon up the Rat (Porcupine) River to British territory should he be challenged by the Russians. Earlier, when he had been wondering how to deal with a seemingly imminent Russian threat, he might have welcomed such advice. Now, when he believed a direct confrontation with the Russians to be highly unlikely, he considered such an action to be unnecessary and ill advised. Though he thought it imprudent to send company parties downriver toward known Russian posts, he was convinced that Fort Yukon could continue to operate successfully for some time to come. Hoping to sway his superiors to his way of thinking, he laid out his concerns and considerations in the letters with which he forwarded the Russian note (HBC 1849:fo. 486-488, 1849-50b:43-47).

Rae's response came in the spring mail of 1850. He accepted the Russian note as a potentially important piece of intelligence, but, unable to read it, he, too, passed it on to Governor Simpson. He thanked Murray for his information regarding the true course of the Yukon and the extent of Russian activity in that country, and advised him to continue to act as he thought best in pursuing the Yukon trade (HBC 1849-50b:39-40).

Simpson's reply was somewhat longer in coming. Unable to find anyone literate in Russian at Lachine, he sent the note on to London, but even without a translation he had decided that the company should continue its operations out of Fort Yukon "without reference to the movements of the Russians." If the Russian-American Company was planning a protest against Hudson's Bay Company intrusion into their territory, it would come from St. Petersburg through proper diplomatic channels, not in some pencil scrawl delivered by an Indian. In the meantime, he thought it essential that the company "make the most of [its] opportunities in that new

and valuable country," concentrating its efforts on the interior rather than working toward the coast where there was a greater chance of meeting Russians (Rich 1953:329, 331).

The translation which the governor finally received was neither enlightening nor frightening:

> Russian American Company
>
> Baidarschik--a maker of Seal Skin Canoes Koulatoffskoy--partner
>
> Wisilii Dearibak--River Koafpake--1849--Month of June--17th day.
>
> (HBC 1850:228)

From the comments of the London office, Simpson concluded that the Russian handwriting was so bad that the note was likely "the production of some Aleutian hunter who had been partially educated and not of any of the Russian American Company's Officers." From the scant content of the note itself, he could conclude only that "it appears to have been written in a friendly spirit and not as a warning that we were intruding on Russian Territory."[42] Thus reinforced in his opinions regard-

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[42]The Russian note is found in the original among correspondence preserved in the Hudson's Bay Company archives at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada (HBC 1850-51a:fo. 2). The note is in pencil on a single side of a small (ca. 7 inches by 6 inches) piece of paper with one jaggedly torn edge and multiple creases from having been folded even smaller. It states simply (my translation):

> The Russian American Company's
> baidarshchik [post manager] of Nulato
> odinochka Vasilii Deriabin
> Kvivpak [*sic*] River
> 1849 June 17th
> M R [Mikhailovskii redoubt?]

On examining a xerox copy of this note, Dr. Lydia Black and Dr. Richard Pierce, both of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, expressed the opinion that it represents only a signature sheet or cover sheet for the letter itself (Black and Pierce, oral communications, November 1985). Be that as it may, it is clear from Murray's correspondence regarding the note that he received only this page (HBC 1849:fo. 492-495).

ing the Yukon trade, the governor instructed Murray to continue to extend his operations up the river and inland rather than toward the coast, where he might meet the Russians and elicit their official protests (HBC 1848-51:147).

Simpson's instructions, written in mid December of 1850, could not have reached the Yukon before the spring mail delivery of 1851. Though it may have given Murray great satisfaction to know that the governor shared his own opinions regarding the future of the Yukon trade, that future was now in the hands of his successors at Fort Yukon. Complaining of ill health, Murray had that year obtained permission to transfer to somewhat more hospitable climes.

CHAPTER 5
THE SHIFTING BALANCE OF THE YUKON FUR TRADE

At the end of May, 1849, Vasilii Deriabin and his boat crew set out up the Kvikhpak from Nulato for the spring trade. They stopped at the Novokat (Nowitna) River long enough to purchase 300 beaver skins from the Natives gathered there, then continued upriver toward "Lake Mintokh" (Yukon Flats). They were still about a hundred versts (107 km, 66 mi) from their destination when they met a flotilla of thirty fur-laden Native canoes coming from the direction of the lake. Much to the traders' surprise the Natives, to whom the Russian-American Company refused to sell firearms, fired a dozen guns in greeting. Hastily returning the salute, Deriabin approached the party to propose that they stop to trade. To this the Natives readily agreed.

During the trade, in which the Russians managed to purchase 320 skins, Deriabin carefully questioned the Natives about the firearms. They explained that the guns belonged to twelve men among them whose tribe lived by the "Ekho" River. These twelve had purchased the weapons from two toyons (rich men) who, with a crew of five, had recently settled on the Ekho. According to the Natives, the strangers on the Ekho were like the Russians in facial features and hair and had many types of things besides guns which they were willing to barter for furs. Deriabin noted that all the guns were of good quality, stowed in scabbards, and well supplied with ball, shot, powder, and flints. Equally interesting were other foreign items in the possession of the Ekho River Natives: English knives, large red and white seed beads (*biser*) similar to the Russians' common beads (*busy*), and twist tobacco, all items which suggested that the traders upriver were Englishmen rather than Russians.

By September of 1848, at the latest, both the Russians at Mikhailovskii redoubt and the coastal Natives as far north as Kotzebue Sound had already heard rumors that six white strangers were active somewhere in the interior (Seemann 1853:183). This,

however, was the first concrete evidence that the rumors had some basis in fact. While the situation quite obviously demanded further investigation, Deriabin did not immediately have the means to pursue the matter. His first responsibility was to return to Nulato in time to dispatch the remainder of the season's furs and reports. The best he could do was to dispatch a letter upriver with one of the Natives in the hope that the strangers would identify themselves in response (RCS 31/241:fo. 148v-149, 19 May 1850, 33/506:fo. 344-345, 369, 16 Jun 1852).

News of Deriabin's encounter reached Sitka by way of Mikhailovskii redoubt, manager Andrei Gusev, in the autumn of 1849. Mikhail D. Teben'kov, then in his final year as chief manager of the colonies, read Gusev's report closely. Still proud of his role in establishing the company's trade in the north, he had no desire to be remembered as the chief manager who lost the Kvikhpak to the British, but he could not plot effective countermeasures based upon such insubstantial information. At the first opportunity, that is, with the spring mail of 1850, he ordered Gusev to investigate the matter as thoroughly as possible and to report in all detail to the chief manager's office (RCS 31/362:fo. 234v, 6 Jun 1850).

Teben'kov knew that it was important to react to British encroachment quickly, both on the ground and through diplomatic channels, for the more firmly the intruders were able to establish themselves, the more difficult it would be to reclaim the trade. He was also painfully aware of the slowness of colonial communications. Had Gusev, on his own initiative, already undertaken an investigation of Deriabin's report, the chief manager might obtain additional information as early as September, with the return of the northern transport. If, as was more likely, Gusev was awaiting direct orders to investigate the situation, the results would not reach Sitka before the autumn of 1851. And, given the schedule of colonial mail delivery, it would likely be an additional nine months before St. Petersburg could initiate diplomatic protests and Sitka could issue instructions to guide the reaction from Mikhailovskii redoubt. In his last months in the colonies, the chief manager did his best to hasten the process. He began to cast about for alternative sources of information regarding British activities in

the northern interior.

The arrival in Sitka of the Hudson's Bay Company steamer *Beaver* soon offered Teben'kov an opportunity to gather the necessary intelligence. The *Beaver* supplied all the Hudson's Bay Company's coastal posts north of Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island and, in annual trading voyages along the strip of mainland coast which the British firm leased from the Russians, commonly cruised as far north as Lynn Canal. Her commander, Captain Charles Dodd, was thus in a position to keep abreast of all the rumors, gossip, and news of the British coastal trade. While the *Beaver* laid up at the Port of Sitka for repairs, Teben'kov graciously invited Dodd to his table and began to pump him for information.

Dodd had indeed heard something of his company's recent activities in the interior. Through the Chilkat Tlingit, with whom he traded in Lynn Canal, he had received letters from the managers of two new company posts located well to the north of Chilkat territory: Fort Pelly's Fork (Fort Selkirk) and Fort Yukon. He had even had the Chilkats sketch out the route they followed on their occasional trading trips to the posts. When, however, Teben'kov pressed him for information regarding locations of and trade at the new posts, Dodd protested that he knew little other than through rumor and became uncommunicative. The chief manager was nonetheless able to glean enough information "in snatches" to add to the colonial charts the approximate locations of the posts and the Chilkat trade route (Collinson 1889:91, 93; RCS 33/506:fo. 345v-346v, 16 Jun 1852).

The information he obtained from Dodd, when combined with the accounts of Natives and local traders, thoroughly convinced Teben'kov that the new British posts were on the upper reaches of the river the Russians called the Kvikhpak. But, despite suspicions that at least one of those posts, Fort Yukon, lay within Russian territory, he still lacked the precise locational data that would allow the company to press charges of trespass. That would be for his successor as chief manager, Nikolai Ia. Rozenberg, to investigate. For the time being, the newly compiled colonial charts would most politicly show Fort Yukon to be located just to the east of the Russian American

boundary, safely within the British possessions (Collinson 1889:91-93; RCS 33/506:fo. 346v-347v, 16 Jun 1852; Teben'kov 1981:unnumbered chart, Karta severnoi chasti severnago Tikhago Okeana[43]).

Russian colonial officials were not the only ones interested in looking into Deriabin's report of Europeans trading on the Kvikhpak. That autumn Captain Richard Collinson of HMS *Enterprise*, southward bound after a summer of searching the Bering and Chukchi Seas for traces of Sir John Franklin's lost expedition,[44] called at Sitka to obtain fresh supplies and pay his respects to the Russian authorities. He informed Chief Manager Rozenberg and the departing Teben'kov that he had left three of his crew at Mikhailovskii redoubt for the winter to investigate the persistent rumors of white men living in the interior.

Lieutenant John Barnard, leader of the wintering party, had been moved to volunteer for the mission after reading the journal of a fellow officer, Lieutenant Bedford Pim. In 1849-50, Pim had wintered aboard HMS *Plover* in Kotzebue Sound, where local Eskimos kept the crew well supplied with stories of Arctic shipwrecks and white strangers in the north. In March of 1850, as the hours of daylight began to lengthen, Pim grew eager for a change of scene and convinced his commanding officer to send him overland to Mikhailovskii to seek verification of the rumors. He found the redoubt's residents to be even less informed than he about the tales then current in Kotzebue Sound, but they were quite willing to repeat the story of

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[43]Though the date printed on this chart is 1849, the inclusion of Forts Yukon and "Fork" and of the Chilkat trade route which winds its way through the mountains suggests that the engraving was not completed until some time between June and October of 1850, when Teben'kov collected this information from Dodd.

[44]Sir John Franklin's third Arctic expedition, last sighted in July of 1845 in Baffin Bay, had disappeared while seeking a water passage between the Atlantic and Pacific. For six years (1848-1854) the British Admiralty sponsored an extensive search of the waters of the eastern and western Arctic and along the mainland coasts for some trace of the missing party. Though the searchers failed in their stated mission, their explorations added considerably to British geographic and ethnographic knowledge of the north (Ray 1975a:140-156).

Deriabin's encounter of the previous spring. Working through Pavel Agliaiuk, an interpreter on loan from the Russians who was "ignorant of English [but] had a slight knowledge of the Spanish language" (Seemann 1853:8-9), Pim gathered what account he could of the incident.

At first Pim was skeptical that the white men reported to be living on the "Ek-ko" River and damaging the Russian trade were any but servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, perhaps themselves in search of Franklin. The longer he talked to redoubt manager Gusev, however, the more inclined he was to reconsider. Whether through the difficulties of translation, Pim's interpolations, or Russian exaggeration in the retelling, Deriabin's original report of two officers and five men who had sold guns with flints, ammunition, and other items to the Natives for furs, was soon transformed into two officers and ten men who had been forced to barter their percussion guns for food.[45] By the time he left Mikhailovskii to return to the *Plover*, the lieutenant was convinced that the strangers on the "Ek-ko" were the remnants of Franklin's party (Seemann 1853:142-144).

Much to his disappointment, Pim could not convince the captain of the *Plover* that there was any substance to the rumor. Only in August did he have an opportunity to return to the redoubt, this time aboard HMS *Herald*. Unfortunately, both redoubt manager Gusev and his assistant had just departed for Sitka. The new manager, Timofei Chadrantsov, offered full assistance in the Franklin search, but, being new to the country, pleaded complete ignorance regarding the activities of white men on the "Ek-ko." When the Englishmen pressed interpreter Agliaiuk for more information regarding the double-barreled gun which, in Pim's understanding, had been bartered by the Indians, Agliaiuk replied vaguely that he knew an Indian who had seen such a gun. The promising report of Franklin party survivors had evaporated to nothing. In addition, Pim and his companions now learned that the "Ek-ko," or "Lek-kho," did

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[45]The latter figures are closer to the number of men actually posted at Fort Yukon in 1847 through 1849, but surviving records give no indication that the post was then trading any guns other than flintlocks.

not flow into the Arctic Ocean, from which Franklin might have entered the river, but was actually a headwater of the Kvikhpak. Discouraged, and disgusted with their interpreters, the officers of the *Herald* decided against any further investigation of Pim's report (Seemann 1853:182-185).

Captain Collinson of the *Enterprise* was unwilling to dismiss the rumors so quickly. He welcomed Barnard's offer to remain at Mikhailovskii redoubt to gather more detailed information, and when Assistant-Surgeon Edward Adams volunteered as well, he assigned seaman Thomas Cousins to accompany them. Calling at Mikhailovskii in mid October (N.S.), he himself went ashore to solicit the post manager's cooperation in the plan.

Collinson was forced to phrase his explanations in "doggerel Spanish," the only language he had in common with interpreter Agliaiuk. Once he had made himself understood, however, he found manager Chadrantsov prepared to render all possible assistance. Chadrantsov, by now more familiar with the affairs of the district, confirmed that his Nulato boat crew had indeed heard of white strangers living in the interior, five white people, if Collinson understood him correctly. It was in Chadrantsov's interest, too, to obtain additional information on this topic, for the colonial chief manager was expecting a full report. Thus assured that his men would be both usefully employed and well taken care of, Collinson bade them farewell and set sail for Sitka (Collinson 1889:78-82).

As soon as they were settled into their new quarters, a room in Chadrantsov's own house, Barnard and his party began their inquiry in earnest. Their orders were to investigate thoroughly the reports that white men had been seen on the Arctic coast, even if it meant traveling to the Russian posts in the interior. Moreover, since some of the Natives who visited Mikhailovskii were said to trade all along the coast to Point Barrow, at least one member of the shore party was to remain at the redoubt to collect information on Native routes of communication with the Polar Sea (Arctic Ocean) and the feasibility of exploring those routes over the following summer (Adams 1850-51:3-5).

For communication with their Russian hosts, they were dependent upon interpreter Agliaiuk, who had by this time added a smattering of English to his vocabulary. In a mixture of sign language, Spanish, and English, he recounted for them again Deriabin's 1849 meeting with the Indians who had guns. Much of the story was already familiar to them, but several new facts emerged in this retelling. They were especially interested to learn that Deriabin had actually purchased a gun from one of the Indians. Hoping to obtain more information from Deriabin himself, and perhaps even meet some of the Natives who had traded with the white men on the "Ekko," the Englishmen decided to visit Nulato (Adams 1850-51:2, 9-10).

In the month or so that remained before the winter trail to Nulato would be open, Barnard and his party busied themselves with preparations for the trip. They needed furs and skins for winter clothing and bedding, and dogs to transport their outfit. Rather than purchase these items through the post manager, as company employees were required to do, they chose to trade with the Natives on their own.

Manager Chadrantsov said nothing about their local purchases, but began to watch the Englishmen more closely. He knew from experience that foreign visitors were not to be trusted. Just that summer, when he had still been manager on St. George Island, the captain of a foreign whaling vessel had entertained him aboard ship while his sailors stole ashore to poach the fur seal rookery. That incident would surely earn him a reprimand, if not worse, when the chief manager learned of it, and he was determined not to be duped again (RCS 32/576:fo.422-422v, 7 Jun 1851). He also knew that local rumor attributed recent declines in the northern fur returns to illegal trade by the vessels searching for Franklin (Seemann 1853:183). Though he did not yet have the evidence to prove these allegations, he found the behavior of his English guests to be highly suspect. They were asking far too many questions about trade routes, the locations of Russian posts, and the organization of Russian operations in the north.

Barnard and his party soon discovered the limits of Chadrantsov's tolerance. Late in November they accompanied the Russian manager on a trading trip to Pasto-

lik. While the Russians bargained for the few furs the Natives were willing to sell them, the Barnard party bought eight dogs for one to one and a half pounds of tobacco apiece (Adams 1850-51:37-38, 43-44). Such behavior seemed to confirm Chadrantsov's worst suspicions about the Englishmen. Not only had they demonstrated their readiness to establish independent relations with the Pastol'miut, a people who still competed with the Russians for the trade of the lower river, but, in paying for the dogs in tobacco, they had contributed to the local devaluation of a commodity which the Russians tried to reserve for the barter of furs. Chadrantsov vehemently objected to the transaction, but could not undo it. From that time onward, he pointedly distanced himself from the visitors who had so abused his hospitality.

Chadrantsov's sudden "uncivil" coldness took the Englishmen by surprise. They guessed that the Russian suspected them of trying to set up a rival trade operation, but, firm in the belief that all of their dealings had been impeccably open and honest, they did not condescend to offer additional explanations. The party's growing sense of isolation was compounded by the difficulty of communicating through an interpreter who was only marginally qualified for the task. As their relations with Chadrantsov deteriorated, the Englishmen were increasingly inclined to see deliberate deceit in what may simply have been imperfect transmission of the words of their Russian host[46] (Adams 1850-51:44, 54-57).

Barnard and his party were anxious to leave their unhappy situation to continue on to Nulato. On their return from Pastolik, however, they learned that a letter

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[46]When questioned by Chief Manager Rozenberg on this topic, Chadrantsov declared that he had done everything possible to satisfy the demands of the Englishmen, and that if they still complained against him, it was because of the

> lack of understanding which very often occurred in his, Chadrantsov's, explanations with the [English] officers due to the very poor knowledge by our interpreters (Aleuts) of the Spanish language in which they talked with the English; there were no discussions between them in the English language due to the complete lack of knowledge of it by anyone at Mikhailovskii redoubt. (RCS 32/835:fo. 615-615v, 29 Nov 1851)

received at Nulato from the Englishmen up the Kvikhpak was expected to arrive at Mikhailovskii within ten days. They decided to delay their departure until they had examined the letter, for it was likely to contain information pertinent to their investigations (Adams 1850-51:45-46).

The ten days stretched into nearly a month. Finally, on 23 December (N.S.), Vasilii Deriabin himself arrived bearing the much-anticipated dispatch. To the great disappointment of the Barnard party, it proved to be a letter not from the survivors of the Franklin expedition, but from Alexander Murray of Fort Yukon. Dated 9 June 1850, it stated merely that Murray had received Deriabin's note of 1849 but that, being unable to read Russian, he could not respond to its content.

Deriabin's answers to questions about the whites rumored to be trading in the interior discouraged the Englishmen still further. He repeated once again the story of his meeting with the Ekho River Natives and described in detail the guns and other trade goods he had seen in their possession. With the exception of some preserved-meat tins, all the trade items seemed to correspond to those commonly sold by the Hudson's Bay Company. This fact, and the failure of Murray's letter to mention any travelers in distress, finally convinced Barnard and his companions that the rumors of white men up the Kvikhpak were irrelevant to the search for Franklin (Adams 1850-51:58-60).

Though he no longer had official reason to do so, Barnard decided to accompany Deriabin back to Nulato. He was curious to see "something of the country and its inhabitants," and likely also wished to avoid a confrontation with Chadrantsov, who had begun to complain that he had insufficient dried fish to feed the sixteen dogs the Englishmen had acquired. On 29 December he set out with Deriabin and interpreter Agliaiuk, leaving Assistant-Surgeon Adams and seaman Cousins at the redoubt to continue their inquiry into Native trade routes.

ATTACK ON NULATO

Adams and Cousins next heard from Barnard on 24 February 1851 (N.S.), when a Native arrived with a brief note. In it, the lieutenant stated that he and Agliaiuk had been badly wounded and Deriabin killed in an attack upon Nulato by Natives of the Koyukuk River. Though he did not expect to live much longer, Barnard begged Adams to come to Nulato in all haste. The note was scrawled on the back of a Russian report of the incident, addressed to Chadrantsov by the clerk of the Nulato post, Aleksandr Shcherbakov. According to Shcherbakov, a large party of "Kuefpattsy and Kuiukontsy" had attacked early on the morning of 4 February (O.S., 15 February by the English calendar), killing not only Deriabin, but nearly everyone in the Native village neighboring the post. Also presumed dead were a company employee and a Native worker who had failed to return from a trip to the Koyukuk. Believing that some of the attackers had remained in the vicinity for another assault, the clerk requested immediate reinforcement (Adams 1850-51:85, 87; RCS 32/632:fo. 469v-470v, 19 Aug 1851).

Adams was shocked by the news. Neither he nor Barnard had been aware of any enmity between the Russians and the Natives of the interior, and they certainly had not anticipated any danger to themselves from that quarter. The Russians, too, were shaken, for they had enjoyed fairly peaceful relations with the region's Natives for more than a decade. Though they were frequently reminded to exercise prudent caution when dealing with large parties of Natives, local managers had not considered it necessary to construct so much as a palisade to protect the outlying odinochkas.[47]

The relief expedition could not leave quickly enough to suit Adams. When Chadrantsov estimated that it would take seven days to prepare for the trip, the Englishman argued until he extracted a promise to depart within three. As temporary

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[47]As already noted, Chief Manager Etholen had ordered improvement in the fortifications at both Ikogmiut and Nulato in 1841 (RCS 20/304:fo. 314, 21 May 1841). Local managers, however, always short of personnel, did not assign high priority to such work in the peaceful conditions that prevailed following the attack on Ikogmiut in 1839.

replacement for Deriabin, Chadrantsov drafted Grigorii Nikitin, a Tungus (Evenk) who had served at Mikhailovskii since before 1842 and had recently been permitted to settle in retirement with his creole wife a few miles from the redoubt. With two or three company employees assigned to reinforce the detachment at Nulato, plus Adams, Cousins, and a Native interpreter, Nikitin set out over the winter trail on 27 February (N.S.) (Adams 1850-51:86-88; RCS 32/632:fo. 471, 19 Aug 1851).

Slowed by poor trail conditions, the party did not reach Nulato until 13 March. The Natives they met en route, at Ulukuk village and near Kaltag, were all in mourning for kinsmen killed at Nulato village, and a delegation from Kaltag, on their way to retrieve the body of their chief, asked to travel with the Russians. All was peaceful when they arrived at Nulato. The Russian detachment there, still tensely watchful, had twice more thought they spotted their attackers lurking in the vicinity, but had suffered no further harm. The post itself was undamaged and remained open for trade. The adjacent Native village, however, had been destroyed. Nearly all who had been present at the time of the attack lay dead, and all their property had been burned or broken (Adams 1850-51:92-93, 100-102, 112, 117).

Adams found Barnard dead nearly a month. He saw to a proper burial in the post cemetery, and attempted to compile the facts of the attack for the necessary reports to his superiors. As nearly as he could ascertain, Barnard and Deriabin had arrived at the post on 16 January (N.S.). On 10 February Deriabin had dispatched a Russian (Ivan Bulygin) and a Native worker (Skotila) to the Koyukuk River Natives to trade for furs and to "bring back the chief of the tribe," whom Barnard and the post manager wished to see. Though Adams could not learn the reason for this summons, the Russian report of the attack suggests that Barnard was trying to investigate a rumor he had heard at Kaltag regarding the recent murder of eleven white men on the "Yekko" River (Adams 1850-51:108, 119; RCS 32/632:fo. 470, 19 Aug 1851).

No one was suspicious when the two traders failed to return as expected; all assumed that they had merely been delayed on the trail. Early on the morning of 15 February, however, a large party of Koyukuk River Natives lay in wait for Deriabin

as he stepped out his door. They stabbed him and rushed into his house, where the noise had awakened Barnard and Agliaiuk. The Englishman and his interpreter tried to defend themselves, but both were seriously wounded before their assailants withdrew. Meanwhile, one of Deriabin's wives, who had witnessed the murder of her husband from the cookhouse, had run to rouse the remainder of the post's small detachment. As the Natives regrouped on the river bank, one of the company employees opened fire upon them from the barracks window. One of the Natives fell dead, and the rest quickly retreated into the surrounding trees.

Next the raiders went to Nulato village,[48] located, by Adams's estimate, some five hundred yards west of the post. It was not a large settlement, but on this occasion it was crowded with visitors from the downriver villages of Ulukuk, Kaltag, and "Kuk.ki.ix," the latter located somewhere between Kaltag and Nulato. The attackers surprised the residents and guests as they slept and killed nearly everyone present, fifty-three men, women, and children.[49] The sole man who had managed to escape told Adams that, during the attack, the aggressors had asked their victims "why they allowed white men to come and live with them," and had admitted to killing the two traders who had been sent to their village.[50] The survivor also reported that he had heard the raiders threaten to return to burn the posts at Nulato and Mikhailovskii and kill all the Russians (Adams 1850-51:104-105, 107-112).

Through his interpreters, Adams could learn of no motive for the attack. From what he could understand, neither the Russians nor the local Natives had been

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[48]Russian accounts, too, state that the raiders went to the Native village only after the attack on the Nulato post (Netsvetov 1984:259), but according to Native oral tradition, Nulato village was attacked first (Jette 1913, 1914; Wright 1995).

[49]Among the dead were fifteen Inkality (Lower Yukon Koyukon) who had been baptized in the Orthodox Church: a young man and a boy from Nulato odinochka; four men, four women, and four children from Uliukagmiut settlement, including toyon (leader) Marko Iakutov and his wife; and a young man from Kuigugliuk settlement, apparently located on a tributary of the Unalakleet River (ARCA 1852:42-43).

[50]For a Native oral tradition concerning "The One Who Escaped," see Joe (1987:16-20).

on bad terms with the Koyukuk River people. Given the coincidence of the attack with Barnard's summons to the Koyukuk chief, the Englishman could only guess that the traders who had gone to fetch the chief had somehow offended the inhabitants of that region. He reasoned that the Natives might have killed the traders in retaliation, then decided to kill the Russians and Nulato Natives before they could discover the crime (Adams 1850-51:113-114).

With this, Adams closed his investigation of Barnard's death. Before leaving Nulato, he made a few more inquiries into the reports of white traders on the upper river, and at the end of March returned to Mikhailovskii more thoroughly convinced than ever that it was the opening of a Hudson's Bay Company post, rather than the wanderings of Franklin's men, that had given rise to all the rumors (Adams 1850-51:118-120). The Englishmen rejoined HMS *Enterprise* in early July, unable to report any new evidence of the fate of the Franklin expedition.

By the end of July (O.S.), Chadrantsov had completed his own investigation of the problems at Nulato and reported his findings to Sitka via the annual transport. This report, which Chief Manager Rozenberg forwarded to St. Petersburg without comment (RCS 32/835:fo. 614-615, 29 Nov 1851), was apparently the source of historian Petr A. Tikhmenev's information regarding the true motivations behind the raid. Citing a document in the company's St. Petersburg archives, file for 1852, he noted: "It was found later on that the attack occurred because of the protection which the Russians were giving to the Nulato natives, with whom the Kuiuk [Koyukuk] natives had a feud" (Tikhmenev 1978:351).

The unusual circumstances of Lieutenant Barnard's death have inspired many written accounts of the event now popularly known as the "Nulato Massacre." Those most frequently quoted in histories of Alaska come from the writings of William Healey Dall (1870:48-52), Frederick Whymper (1868a:183-185), and Hubert Howe Bancroft (1886:572-574), who cite both Barnard's impolite summons and Deriabin's alleged ill treatment of the Natives as the offenses which led the raiders to seek

revenge.[51]

Anthropologists and ethnohistorians have since dismissed this interpretation. Working from both published sources and Nulato-area Native oral traditions collected by Father Jules Jette early in the twentieth century, they have documented an enmity between the lower-middle Yukon and Koyukuk River Athabaskans (Lower Yukon and Koyukuk River Koyukon) which seems to have been rooted in their rivalry as middlemen in the coast-interior fur trade and very likely predated the Russians' Nulato post (Jette 1914; de Laguna 1947:52; Loyens 1966:104-107; Clark 1974:187-191). The attack upon Nulato village was but the last in a series of raids and counter-raids between these two peoples.

A recent study by Miranda Wright (1995) adds another dimension to this interpretation. While not dismissing the influence of economic and social dislocations arising from the fur trade, it emphasizes Koyukon perceptions of the conflict as reflected in Lower Yukon Koyukon oral tradition. According to that tradition, the attack on Nulato was the culminating event in a power struggle between three regional spiritual advisors or shamans (*deyenenh*) attempting to restore social and spiritual order to their own regions (Wright 1995:54).

Specifically, through the spirit of a deceased shaman from *Todenaats'egheel-taanh Denh* (Whaleback, on the Unalakleet River), a shaman from *Hogholedlenh Denh* (Zagoskin's Khogoltlinde, across the Yukon from present-day Kaltag) caused harm to the people of *Kodeelkaakk'et* (at the mouth of the Kateel River). Many of the Kateel people died.[52] In retaliation and to protect themselves from further harm, a

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[51]Cf. Huntington (1993:69-71), who combines the Dall and Bancroft versions.

[52]Because Russian contacts with people of the Kateel area were relatively limited, the written record provides little insight into the date or circumstances of these deaths. The only direct mention of disease-related deaths on the Koyukuk is found in Zagoskin, who recorded a Native report that people were dying along the Yunnaka (Koyukuk) in 1843 (Zagoskin 1956b:133-134, 1967:145). The respiratory infections that were widespread on the lower Yukon and the Kuskokwim in 1848 and on the lower Yukon in the early months of 1849 and 1850 may well have reached the lower Koyukuk, but their effects

party of *Kodeelkaakk'et* men set out to destroy the Kaltag-area shaman while the latter was attending a winter feast at *Noolaaghe Doh*, the Native settlement near Nulato odinochka (Wright 1995:23, 47-52). The tradition Wright recounts makes no mention of why the Kaltag-area shaman wished to harm the Kateel people or of why the Russian post at Nulato was included in the retaliatory attack.

Historians still occasionally cite Deriabin's "brutality" as one incentive for the attack (Webb 1985:42-43). This is a particularly inappropriate remembrance for the late manager. Colonial officials, aware that success in the northern trade depended upon the good will of local populations, were constantly alert to reports of mistreatment of the Natives by post managers. A number of the northern employees were accused of such behavior over the years, some justly, some unfairly, but surviving company records yield not the slightest hint of such complaints against Deriabin in more than fifteen years of northern service. On the contrary, Zagoskin described him as a kind-hearted man who had given material assistance to Nulato-area survivors of the smallpox epidemic of the late 1830s, and Edward Adams, who met him shortly before his death, reported him to be "a great favourite with everyone, especially with the natives" (Adams 1850-51:60; Zagoskin 1956b:135-137, 1967:146-147). He was reportedly survived by two Native wives, one of whom, Marina, he had hoped soon to marry in the Church, and at least two children (Adams 1850-51:122; RCS 32/579:424-424v, 7 Jun 1851).[53]

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there are unknown. On the lower Yukon, they were temporarily debilitating, but caused few deaths (Netsvetov 1984:84, 97-103, 110-111, 132, 190-191).

[53]Church records seem to suggest that Deriabin was father of the creole girl Aleksandra Vasil'eva Deriabin, born ca. 1843, but do not identify her mother (ARCA 1860:30-31). In addition, clues provided by Dall and by Church records suggest that one of Deriabin's common-law wives was Marina, an Inkalit (Lower Yukon Koyukon) woman from Takaiaksa settlement who married Nulato post manager Ivan Pavlov in 1864, and that Marina's daughter Matrena (born ca. 1849, drowned 1866) was Deriabin's child (Dall 1870:44; ARCA 1863c:fo. 9v-10, 1864c:fo. 26v-27, 1865a:fr. 491, 1866a:fo. 22v-23).

A Decade of Russian Retrenchment

Rumors of lower Koyukuk Koyukon plans to attack settlements farther down the Kvikhpak kept both Russians and Natives on edge all through the spring of 1851, but faded as the region's inhabitants dispersed for the summer's fishing and trading (Netsvetov 1984:238, 241, 247). At Nulato, Grigorii Nikitin quickly restored order among the detachment, and was so successful in reestablishing normal trade relations with the surrounding Natives that the Nulato fur returns for fiscal year 1850-51 matched those of the previous year (RCS 33/768:fo. 536-536v, 23 Nov 1852). By late summer, when the annual supply vessel *Kniaz' Menshikov* arrived, peace had returned to the northern district.

Skipper Vasilii G. Pavlov brought no orders from the chief manager regarding the recent problems at Nulato, for word of the attack had not reached Sitka before his departure. As commander of the northern transport, however, he had broad authority to deal with all matters of discipline and order which came to his attention while at Mikhailovskii. On this occasion, he saw little need for direct intervention; Chadrantsov had handled the situation quite satisfactorily on his own. After collecting local testimony for his supplemental report to the chief manager, Pavlov had only to appoint someone to relieve Nikitin, who wished to return to retirement as soon as possible. The man he chose for this sensitive position was Ivan Serebrennikov, a creole who had served in the north in various capacities since 1843. Iakov Niugren, Chadrantsov's successor as manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt, thrice protested the appointment (or so he later claimed) on the grounds that Serebrennikov was untrustworthy, but Pavlov chose to ignore his advice (RCS 34/473:fo. 162-162v, 19 Jun 1853).

Niugren's apprehensions were well founded. Serebrennikov accompanied the fall transport to Nulato and assumed his post in September of 1851. By April of the following year, his insolent treatment, and even beatings, of the Natives who came to trade had so incensed the inhabitants of the Koyukuk and upper Kvikhpak Rivers that they had stopped visiting the post and were threatening to attack it. Niugren immedi-

ately recalled the miscreant to Mikhailovskii and appointed in his stead Semeon Parfent'ev Parshin, a Russian of mature years who had served in the north intermittently since 1833. As traveling baidarshchik in charge of transport between Mikhailovskii and Nulato, Parshin had over the previous decade earned a reputation for levelheadedness and polite treatment of the Natives. Niugren hoped that these qualities would enable the new manager to avert the threatened hostilities and win back the Natives' trust and good will (Netsvetov 1984:310n; RCS 33/768:fo. 536v-537, 23 Nov 1852).

It took Parshin several months to overcome the enmity engendered by Serebrennikov's behavior. At the beginning of August 1852 an attack by the Koyukuk River people seemed so imminent that he was compelled to send to Mikhailovskii redoubt for reinforcements. Niugren sent him three company employees and three Native workers with the fall transport, which was just setting out for Nulato. These would increase the post's complement of Russian and creole men to ten, a force sufficiently large to defend the establishment, now enclosed in a strong fence and armed with a falconet, against any Native assault. Much to the detachment's relief, however, local tensions eased before they had to put the new defenses to the test. The Natives, finding Parshin much more agreeable than his predecessor, gradually resumed trading at the post, and the station's fur returns, which had noticeably declined under Serebrennikov's management, began to approach their former level (Netsvetov 1984:313-314; RCS 33/738, 768:fo. 503, 535v-536, 23 Nov 1852, 34/476:fo. 164, 19 Jun 1853, 35/65:fo. 18v-19, 1 May 1854).

The aspect of the Nulato trade that proved most difficult to revive was the annual expedition upriver to Mintokh (Yukon Flats). Niugren thought the undertaking too dangerous given the agitated state of the upriver Natives, and specifically forbade Parshin to make the trip in 1852. Acting Chief Manager Aleksandr I. Rudakov, Rozenberg's temporary replacement, wholeheartedly approved the redoubt manager's prudence in this matter. Regarding future trips in that direction, he advised Niugren to consider employee safety before company profit and act as local circumstances

dictated. In Rudakov's opinion, it would be permissible to resume visits to Mintokh only if an expedition large enough to be safe from attack could be dispatched there without reducing the detachment remaining at Nulato to fewer than ten European men[54] (RCS 34/473, 477:fo. 162, 164v-165, 19 Jun 1853). For the time being, the company had effectively withdrawn from the upriver trade.

The company's directors in St. Petersburg were not prepared to relinquish any portion of the northern trade so easily. On the contrary, their plans for the north included expansion of the trade, both along the coast and in the interior, and aggressive competition against all rivals for the region's peltry. In 1852 they had ordered Chief Manager Rozenberg to take measures to improve the company's competitive position in the region, but neither he nor Rudakov made much progress (RCS 34/42, 341:fo. 27v-28v, 361-361v, 2 Mar and 30 May 1853). In 1853, spurred on, perhaps, by receipt of Alexander Murray's letter from Fort Yukon and Rozenberg's reports of renewed Native unrest and a drop in fur returns on the Kvikhpak, the directors issued a further call for decisive action. This time their orders met with more favorable reception in the colonies. Chief Manager Stepan V. Voevodskii, who had relieved Rudakov in April of 1854, quickly assured the Main Office that the company's business in the north would be his constant concern. He was prepared to do everything within his power to strengthen the company's hold on that segment of its trade (RCS 35/65:fo. 19, 1 May 1854).[55]

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[54]To this end, Rudakov intended to send ten new Russian and Yakut employees to Niugren in the summer of 1853. He managed to send nine, and hoped that Niugren would be able to convince three of his men whose terms had expired to remain in northern service. Niugren was unsuccessful. Three Russians, a Finlander, and two creoles departed with the annual transport, leaving the redoubt manager with a net gain of only three employees, too few to increase the Nulato staff to the level Rudakov had envisioned (ARCA 1853:fr. 799-800, 829; RCS 34/477, 479:fo. 165-166, 19 Jun 1853).

[55]Unfortunately, neither the orders of 1852 (No. 373, 21 March) nor those of 1853 (No. 981, 28 August) are found among the company papers preserved in the U.S. National Archives. We can only infer their content from references in the chief managers' outgoing correspondence.

Voevodskii's first order of business was to replace the manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt. By the end of 1852 it had already been clear to Chief Manager Rozenberg that the incumbent, Iakov Niugren, lacked the robust health and attention to discipline desirable in a man in his position, but circumstances had prevented dispatch of anyone better qualified (RCS 34/38, 21:fo. 25-25v, 53v, 19 Feb and 4 Apr 1853). The situation had only worsened with time, and by the late summer of 1853 Niugren himself was petitioning to be relieved of the post. His files full of the complaints of Niugren and his men against each other and reports of frequent insubordination within the ranks, Voevodskii was happy to grant the request. In June of 1854 he sent Yaroslavl' peasant Ignatii Andreianov, a man of broad experience both in post management and in dealing with Natives, to restore order to the northern operations (RCS 35/231, 232:fo. 99v, 101-101v, 17 Jun 1854).

Andreianov's most important assignment was to explore ways in which to increase the quantity and quality of furs traded throughout the northern district. Voevodskii suggested that he experimentally supplement the standard payments for the most desirable furs--prime land otter, silver and cross fox, marten, lynx, and black bear--with small gifts "as if out of gratitude that they [the Natives] sell us the furs which we want." In this way, he thought, the company could test the effect of higher prices on fur yields without giving the Natives the impression that it had raised the official tariff for all time. Moreover, if the gifts were made in soap, tea, and European clothing or textiles, the company might stimulate broader Native demand for these potentially profitable items. An unscrupulous manager could, of course, claim to have given such gifts while expending them for personal profit. For this reason, Voevodskii recommended that the experiment initially be confined to Mikhailovskii and Kolmakovskii redoubts.

The chief manager was aware that many of the Natives trading at Mikhailovskii still spurned European clothing and foods in favor of native products. As had others before him, he believed that the company could claim a major share of the trade in subsistence goods, and thus greatly increase its fur returns, if only it could

stock the items most in demand. To this end, he ordered Andreianov to investigate in detail the types of sea mammal oil and skins the Natives preferred, what they were willing to pay for them, and whether commodities produced at company stations on the Pribilof Islands might be acceptable substitutes. Andreianov was also to obtain two specimens of each of the items of Chukchi-made clothing which local Natives seemed to prefer so that the company could order similar things from Siberia, and, in general, to update the company's information on the items of commerce and prices prevalent in the Chukchi trade.

Finally, in the matter of trading expeditions, the company had at other times and places found it expedient to commission trustworthy Natives to carry the trade into the villages. The chief manager suggested that Andreianov consider issuing small quantities of goods on credit for this purpose and reward diligent traders with gifts. He advised, however, that one reliable and bright company employee accompany each such expedition in order to record the villages visited, their population numbers, and their needs and preferences in goods. This would allow Andreianov to expand the trade without additional personnel and provide him information from which to plan increasingly effective trade ventures in the future (RCS 35/230:fo. 95v-99v, 17 Jun 1854).

Thus entrusting the future of Mikhailovskii and its subordinate posts to the capable Andreianov, Voevodskii turned his attention to two projects his immediate predecessor had initiated in response to the company directors' earlier call to action. Chief Manager Rudakov had asked the Sitka office to prepare a list of Siberian goods the company needed to stock in order to compete with the Chukchi for the northern trade. Voevodskii now forwarded the list to the Main Office with a request that the items be procured as soon as possible. Rudakov had also ordered an investigation of Kotzebue Sound, with an eye toward establishing a post on the Buckland River or at some other convenient location. As that commission had remained unfulfilled, Voevodskii now reassigned the task to Lieutenant Koskul', inspector aboard the vessel *Kad'iak* (RCS 34/490, 585, 341:fo. 169v-171, 224-224v, 361v, 20 Jun, 16 Nov, and

30 May 1853, 35/92, 232, 233:fo. 41-41v, 101v-102, 17 and 21 Jun 1854).

Unfortunately for Voevodskii, events then taking place in Europe were soon to complicate every aspect of colonial management and disrupt all plans for the immediate future. For some years, Russia's policies in the Near East had brought her into diplomatic conflict with various of the European powers (Gleason 1950; Anderson 1958). In the autumn of 1853 and spring of 1854, growing tensions in the region had erupted into open hostilities as first Turkey, then England and France, declared war upon their Russian rival. Though the primary theater of combat was the Black Sea region, England and France, both naval powers, carried the so-called Crimean War even to the shores of the Pacific, and everywhere remained ready to seize any Russian vessel caught outside the safety of a neutral port (Florinsky 1953:826-878; Gough 1971:108-130; Pierce 1972:47).

The mere prospect of such a war had greatly alarmed the directors of the Russian-American Company. They were painfully aware that Russia's American colonies would be easy prey for England and France, for not one of the company's settlements there was adequately equipped to repulse a determined naval attack. Moreover, company furs and supplies moved wholly by sea, both between Russian and foreign ports and the colonies, and between the various colonial ports. Any disruption in shipping could harm the company financially and bring real hardship upon its colonial employees. Consequently, as it became increasingly apparent that England would enter the war on the side of Turkey, the company's directors began seriously to consider how they might best protect the firm's interests. In concert with their Hudson's Bay Company counterparts in London, they negotiated an agreement whereby the North American possessions of both companies would be held neutral in the event of war between their respective nations. Both the Russian and British governments expeditiously approved the convention shortly before their formal break in relations. Though not a party to the agreement, France, as England's ally, also chose to honor it (Bolkhovitinov 1990:93-95; Okun 1951:234-241; Tikhmenev 1978:356-357).

The neutrality convention only partially eased the directors' worries, for the protection it afforded the colonies did not extend to company vessels sailing the high seas. In the autumn of 1854, enemy seizure of the company's new ship *Sitkha*[56] as it was bound for Kamchatka and the narrow escapes of the *Tsesarevich* en route to Kronstadt and the *Kamchatka* en route to San Francisco were enough to convince the company's administration that it would be folly to try to maintain the normal shipping schedule. For the duration of the war, that is, to the spring of 1856, communication with the colonies was greatly curtailed and shipment of furs, supplies, and personnel to and from Russia was suspended. In the interim, Chief Manager Voevodskii had to rely upon neutral American shipping to keep Sitka supplied with foodstuffs and other essentials which the company purchased in San Francisco and elsewhere.

Nor could these measures fully guarantee the safety of the company fleet. Strictly speaking, company vessels were subject to enemy seizure even when sailing between colonial ports. Though this threat may have been more apparent than real, the cautious Voevodskii adjusted the colonial shipping schedule in 1855 and 1856 so that voyages to supply the most distant ports were assigned to two recently purchased vessels, the *Cyane* (later *Nakhimov*) and the *Astoria* (later *Imperator Aleksandr II*), which still flew their neutral American colors. Whether due to these precautions, or merely to lack of interest and resources on the part of the enemy, the company fleet sustained no war losses in colonial waters (Pierce 1972:47-48; Tikhmenev 1978:328-329, 334).

While the colonies escaped serious privation during the war years, the restrictions on shipping decidedly crimped Voevodskii's plans for strengthening the company's competitive position in the north. Not only did the Main Office fail to ship the goods he had specially ordered from Siberia, but Circassian tobacco, an item vital to the northern trade and available only from Russia, was in critically short supply.

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[56]The ten-gun *Sitkha* (*Sitka*), 800 tons, was taken to England as a prize of war (Gough 1971:121 n. 63, 123 n. 70).

Uncertain as to when more might be available, Voevodskii reserved the last of the preferred tobacco for the barter of furs on the Alaskan mainland; for all other purposes, post managers would have to issue the Virginian variety, locally considered to be inferior. Other staples of the northern trade were more readily available in Sitka but, for lack of space aboard the single vessel sent to supply all the western districts, could not be shipped to Mikhailovskii in their usual quantity in 1855. The chief manager had hoped to enhance the northern returns by supplying the region with a greater volume and variety of trade goods. Instead, he was forced to ask Andreianov to expend his reduced supplies with the greatest economy (RCR 21/407:fo. 177-177v, 23 Apr 1855; RCS 36/22, 92:fo. 19v, 52, 16 Feb and 27 May 1855).

Also curtailed were any projects which would require an increase in personnel for their implementation. With the colonies already chronically short of qualified personnel, and no new company employees being sent from Russia, Voevodskii could only advise his post managers to make do with the men they had. At the same time, he canceled all plans to establish a new post on Kotzebue Sound. Lieutenant Koskul's chart of the lower Buckland River and the accompanying report had convinced the chief manager that a post at that location would be difficult to provision even in the best of times. Now, however, he simply could not spare enough men to ensure the safety of such a post in the likely event of an attack by jealous local Native competitors (RCS 37/236:fo. 97, 3 May 1856).

To Voevodskii's relief, the supply crisis lasted no longer than a single season and, thanks to Andreianov's careful management, resulted in but a slight decline in the number of furs received from the north in fiscal year 1855-56. By the summer of 1856, when he was able to resume near-normal shipments of goods, the chief manager again began to plot ways in which to secure a greater share of the region's trade. It was clear that an increase in fur prices was in order, not only to challenge the competition, but also to eliminate certain pricing inequities which had developed over the years. That, however, would require permission from the Main Office. In the interim, he ordered Andreianov to see to it that all posts within his jurisdiction paid

the full prices authorized in the tariff then in effect, thereby essentially raising prices at the outlying odinochkas, whose managers had always been encouraged to purchase furs as cheaply as possible. In 1857, following the company directors' approval of a uniform tariff for the Kodiak and northern districts, he instructed Andreianov to phase in the new, higher prices as quickly as necessary to maintain Native willingness to trade (RCS 37/335:fo. 127v-128, 30 May 1856, 38/266:fo. 78v-79, 24 May 1857).

The wartime shortage of personnel was of longer duration and more keenly felt. Its most immediate effect upon Andreianov's operations was a breakdown in discipline within the ranks. In 1856 Voevodskii denied passage to Sitka to ten northern employees whose contracts had expired, both because he had no one with whom to replace them and because he could not guarantee their passage home to Europe until shipping returned to normal. Several of the employees agreed to renew their contracts at a raise in pay, but six of them could not be satisfied so easily. Detained for an extra year in the north against their will, they expressed their anger through disorderly conduct, insubordination, and, in one case, physical violence against coworkers. Such malcontents were at best untrustworthy, at worst a disruptive influence among the other employees. Andreianov did not lament their departure in 1857, though the chief manager was able to send only four workers in their stead (RCS 37/330:fo. 126v, 30 May 1856, 38/256:fo. 72, 24 May 1857).

In the longer term, the personnel shortage hindered Andreianov's efforts to make the region's trading operations more productive and efficient. Plans to improve fur returns by transferring Andreevskaia odinochka to the Chagliuk (Innoko) River had to be shelved, as were proposals to move one or both of the other odinochkas.[57] Chief Manager Voevodskii would approve such an undertaking only if it could be

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[57]Andreianov's proposals to move the odinochkas apparently dated to May and October of 1855 (RCS 37/320:fo. 124, 30 May 1856). They therefore predated the November, 1855, pillaging of Andreevskaia by a small group of Native (Yup'ik?) renegades from "Robber's village" (*Razboinicheskoe zhilo*, Razboinski). For details concerning that raid and its aftermath, see RCS (37/233:fo. 95-96, 3 May 1856).

accomplished with no increase in the work force, and that Andreianov found impossible (RCS 37/233, 320:fo. 96, 124, 3 and 30 May 1856).

Similarly frustrated were Andreianov's hopes to expand the trading expeditions sent out to Native villages and camps from the odinochkas. While a roving trader operated successfully upriver from Andreevskaia in those years (RCS 37/315, 324:fo. 123, 125v, 30 May 1856), there is no evidence that the expeditions upriver out of Nulato had yet been revived. When Andreianov raised the question of sending his traders farther afield, Voevodskii, echoing his predecessor's orders of 1853, advised against it. Promising to send reinforcements at the first opportunity, he urged Andreianov until then to limit himself to what he could accomplish without depleting the staffs at the odinochkas (RCS 38/264:fo. 76v, 24 May 1857). Curiously, the chief manager made no more mention of enlisting trustworthy Natives to advance this branch of the trade.

The three-year suspension of passenger travel between Russia and the colonies ended in the autumn of 1857, when the company vessel *Tsesarevich* arrived in Sitka bearing a very welcome contingent of new employees. True to his word, Voevodskii dispatched three of them, all that he could spare, aboard the next north-bound vessel (May 1858) to fill out the Mikhailovskii command. He issued no special instructions, for he was confident that Andreianov would deploy his reinforcements to good advantage. On this occasion, however, the redoubt manager let him down. Early in July of 1858, soon after the arrival of the annual transport, the forty-nine-year-old Andreianov quite unexpectedly died. The transport's commander, creole Ilarion Arkhimandritov, left behind one of his own men, his brother Andrei Arkhimandritov, to serve as acting manager until a replacement could be sent (Netsvetov 1984:379; RCS 39/273:fo. 110, 14 May 1858).

Young Arkhimandritov, responsibility for the well-being of an entire region so suddenly thrust upon him, was unprepared to initiate any program of expansion in the trade, but did his best to maintain the status quo. Chief Manager Voevodskii asked no more of Maksim Vakhrameev, a relative newcomer to the colonies whom he dis-

patched to relieve Arkhimandritov in the summer of 1859. Despite the difficulties of the war years, many of the improvements in northern operations which Voevodskii had ordered on assuming the chief managership had been successfully implemented under the late Andreianov. Order in the post accounts and discipline among the employees had been restored, a new, region-wide tariff had been introduced, and the furs bartered in the region had steadily increased in quality, if not in quantity. There was still much that could be done to better the company's competitive position in the region, but Voevodskii, his term as chief manager now rapidly drawing to a close, no longer had either the vision or enthusiasm to propose new programs of expansion in the northern trade. On dispatching Vakhrameev to his new post, he simply instructed him to continue the policies and practices which Andreianov had set in motion (RCS 40/283:fo. 100-101v, 9 Jun 1859).

THE COMPETITION

The difficulties that plagued the Russian-American Company's northern enterprise during this decade--Native unrest, personnel shortages, and temporary disruption in supply--hindered company efforts to deal with a much more fundamental problem, an unprecedented growth in competition for the region's furs. On the coast, Chukotkan and Native Alaskan traders found a ready market for furs and other products aboard the foreign (non-Russian) vessels which had begun to frequent northern waters. In the interior, local managers increasingly noticed the effects of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade.

The year 1848 marked both the arrival in the north Bering Sea of the first of the vessels engaged in the search for Sir John Franklin, and the first venture beyond Bering Strait by an American whaleship. The Franklin search expedition, which the Russians suspected of clandestine trading, peaked at nine vessels and would be gone by 1854 (Ray 1975a:140-156; RCR 20/1009:387-388, 19 Aug 1852; RCS 32/572:fo. 419v-420v, 7 Jun 1851). The whaleship (the American bark *Superior*, captain Thomas Roys), which enjoyed phenomenal success in waters never before hunted by

the commercial fleet, was but the harbinger of a much larger and more disruptive intrusion. Word of the new fishery spread so quickly that by the summer of 1852 more than 220 foreign whaling vessels were cruising the waters of the Bering and Chukchi Seas (Bockstoce 1995:93-97).

The Russian-American Company could do nothing to stop foreign whaling on the open sea, but kept careful watch against whalers who might approach colonial islands and coasts to trade, poach fur seals, or otherwise violate its territorial rights (RCS 32/543:fo. 400v-401, 404-404v, 7 Jun 1851, 33/462:fo.287v-288, 4 Jun 1852). Though colonial officials reported some problems of this nature, instances of flagrant trespass in the early years of the western Arctic fishery were remarkably few given the size of the northern whaling fleet. Intent upon pursuit of the valuable bowhead, the whalers did not yet express much interest in the region's other commercial prospects. What incidental trade did occur, fell primarily to the inhabitants of the Chukotskii coast, along which the whalers found better hunting (Bockstoce 1995:184; Ray 1975a:198-199).

With the whalers, however, there arrived a handful of vessels whose sole object was trade. Based out of Hong Kong, San Francisco, Honolulu, and Australia, they bartered liquor, tobacco, and hardware[58] for furs, ivory, and baleen (Bockstoce 1995:182-184). Their activities on the Chukotskii coast had immediate repercussions throughout the Bering Strait region as Chukotkan traders sought to increase their purchases of North American furs to supply the new market. It was no doubt this intensification of the age-old intercontinental trade which in the early 1850s prompted the Russian-American Company's directors to order redoubled colonial efforts to avert the transfer of furs to the Chukchi.

It was not long before foreign traders were cruising the Russian American side of the strait as well. By 1853 at least one such vessel was dealing directly with Iñupiaq Eskimos at Port Clarence (Ray 1975a:199), and within another year or two

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[58]Initially, firearms were not part of the trade inventory (Bockstoce 1995:185).

foreigners were reportedly visiting Kotzebue Sound, where they had begun to barter firearms to the Natives (RCS 37/236:fo. 97, 3 May 1856). The foreign vessels, still few in number, took care to stay clear of the Russian posts on Norton Sound, and remained so invisible in comparison to the familiar Chukchi trade that for several years colonial officials were not even certain of their presence.

All that changed in 1858 and 1859 when the whaling fleet, virtually absent from Bering Strait since 1855, returned to the region in force. With catches down and baleen prices up, many whalers began for the first time to consider trade as a means to ensure a profitable voyage. By 1859 at least six of them were doing a brisk business in guns, powder, and rum at Port Clarence and one had attempted to trade as far north as Alaska's Icy Cape (Bockstoce 1995:184-185). Colonial officials could no longer doubt that there were now two distinct groups competing with them for the furs which reached the coast, their old rivals the Chukchi and the whaler-traders (RCS 40/283:fo. 100v-101, 9 Jun 1859).

The growing coastal trade in many respects represented but the intensification of an old problem, to which the Russian-American Company applied old solutions. In the Alaskan interior, however, the situation was different. Deriabin's report of 1849 concerning English traders on the upper Kvikhpak alerted colonial officials to a problem they had never before faced in the north, competition with another government-chartered trading company. Both the novelty of the problem and the underlying threat of territorial loss prompted them to call for extraordinary measures to deal with the intrusion even before it had appreciably affected company returns.

Though the Russian-American Company's directors in St. Petersburg had clung briefly to the hope that rumors of white men on the upper Kvikhpak were somehow related to activities of the Franklin search expeditions (RCR 19/454:457-458, 27 Mar 1851), colonial officials harbored no such illusion. Convinced from the first that their competitors in the interior had come from the Hudson's Bay Company, they wasted no time in addressing the vital question of the rival establishment's location, both with respect to the Russian-British boundary and in relation to the existing Russian posts.

As already noted, one of Mikhail Teben'kov's last acts as chief manager had been to coax information on Fort Yukon's location from the reluctant Captain Dodd. Teben'kov's successor, Nikolai Rozenberg, was determined to plot the post's location more precisely.

Based on the information at hand, Rozenberg was convinced that Fort Yukon lay much closer to Nulato than the Russian-British boundary. To the best of his knowledge, the Natives living near Nulato produced few furs but beaver. He also knew that the British were experiencing no less difficulty than the Russians in marketing beaver and could scarcely afford to offer much more than the Russians to acquire such furs. Assuming that the length of the trading trip the Natives were willing to undertake was directly proportional to the profit they could expect from it, the chief manager reasoned that the distance from Nulato to the British post must be so insignificant that local Natives considered even the scant payment they received for beaver to be adequate recompense for the trip (RCS 33/506:fo. 347-347v, 16 Jun 1852).

Having thus alarmed himself, Rozenberg could not wait for Deriabin's supplemental reports, which could not be expected to arrive in Sitka before the autumn of 1851. Through the winter of 1850-51 he made haste to organize a spying expedition to be dispatched to Mikhailovskii aboard the spring supply ship and then overland to Fort Yukon.[59] To his frustration, however, the *Kniaz' Menshikov*, the only vessel available for the run to Mikhailovskii come spring, had insufficient cargo space to transport the extra men and supplies needed for the expedition. Forced to postpone the project for a year, the chief manager consoled himself with the hope that the reports due from Mikhailovskii in the autumn would provide information useful in planning future investigations of the British intrusion (RCS 31/83:fo. 336-336v, 21

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[59]From references in subsequent correspondence, it appears that Rozenberg explained the nature and mission of the proposed expedition in more detail in a secret report to the Main Office, No. 84, dated 21 November 1850. I have been unable to locate this document among the company correspondence.

Nov 1850, 32/512, 824:fo. 308-308v, 604-605v, 24 May and 29 Nov 1851, 33/506:fo. 345-345v, 348, 16 Jun 1852).

Word from the north arrived sooner than expected. Shortly after the *Kniaz' Menshikov*'s departure from Sitka, Rozenberg received the special mail packet which redoubt manager Chadrantsov had dispatched overland at the end of February 1851 to notify his superiors of the Native attack on Nulato. Other considerations aside, the report of Deriabin's death in the attack was particularly unwelcome news. To the chief manager, it meant not only the loss of an experienced and valuable trader, but elimination of the company's most immediate source of information on British trade in the upper Kvikhpak drainage. There was, however, one item in the packet which encouraged Rozenberg to persevere in his plans to investigate the British presence in the region. Enclosed with Chadrantsov's summary of current rumors of British activities in the north was a copy of Alexander Murray's brief letter to Deriabin, the first definite evidence that Englishmen had indeed established themselves on the river "Youcon" (RCS 33/405:fo. 253-253v, 4 Jun 1852). The chief manager redoubled his efforts to organize a northern expedition for the summer of 1852.

The proposed expedition had many purposes--to inquire into the circumstances of the attack on Nulato and the reasons for the region's declining fur returns, to identify new trapping areas, to investigate the abundance of fur resources in the upper Kvikhpak drainage, and in general to expand the company's geographical knowledge of the interior[60]--but its primary goal was to determine whether, and how many,

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[60]Rozenberg's instructions to the expedition are particularly interesting for what they tell us of contemporary notions of the interior geography of Alaska (RCS 33/506:fo. 360v-366, 16 Jun 1852). Curiously, the chief manager tended to give more credence to British speculations upon this topic than to his own files of data collected over the years by Russian-American Company employees. He marveled at the latest British Admiralty charts which indicated several large rivers and even three Russian forts "the existence [of which]..., until receipt of these charts, we did not even suspect." Though he was reasonably certain that there were no Russian posts in the places indicated, so great was his faith in the reliability of the British Admiralty that he ordered the expedition to investigate those localities and, if the forts proved to exist, to find out "by whom, when,

British posts had been established within Russian territory. Rozenberg did not intend to take direct action against the trespassers; that would be for the Russian government to work out with Great Britain. What he needed at this time were reliable astronomical determinations of the locations of any illicit posts and some idea of the nature and extent of their activities, so that the company's directors could bring the problem to government attention. Lest the British traders find some way to hinder the effort, he instructed Ensign Nikolai Kh. Benzeman, the expedition's leader, to keep his true mission secret. If asked, he was to claim that he was simply aiding in the Franklin search (RCS 33/506:fo. 344-370v, 16 Jun 1852).

Though Teben'kov's revised chart of 1849-50 suggested that the Kvikhpak and Yukon were one, Rozenberg was not yet convinced that this was the case. He did, however, concede the likelihood that both rivers were connected to "Lake Mintokh." When plotting information from the latest British Admiralty chart onto a Russian base map for Benzeman's use, he had noted that the widest portion of the Englishmen's Yukon River nearly coincided with the Russians' large inland lake. From this he concluded that Lake Mintokh was actually "the collection and overflow of many rivers which have their source in the English possessions"; that the lake

> by means of a system of other lakes joining with it, and by means of the Porcupine River, joins with the Mackenzie River, and by means of the Colville River (i.e., by means of the continuation of the Yukon River) carries its waters to the Arctic Ocean, and by means of the Kvikhpak River carries its waters to the Bering Sea

and that this body of water was therefore of key importance in the water communications of the far north.[61] In consequence, the chief manager's second major commis-

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and by what orders or permission they were built, who now lives in them, and what those who live there are doing now" (RCS 33/506:fo. 362v, 365, 16 Jun 1852).

[61]Rozenberg had evidently not seen the map published by Sir John Richardson in 1851. Compiled in conjunction with one of the searches for the Franklin expedition, and based in part upon information collected from local Natives by Alexander Hunter Murray, it

sion to Ensign Benzeman was to map the lake, its primary outlets, and the mouths of its largest tributaries, and to explore as far as possible up tributaries entering from the east (RCS 33/506:fo. 364-364v, 16 Jun 1852).

For reasons undisclosed, Rozenberg was forced to remove Benzeman from the expedition just as it was about to set sail for Mikhailovskii. Having no one to send in the officer's place on such short notice, he summarily canceled the mission for that season (RCS 33/578, 768:fo. 396, 535-535v, 20 Jun and 23 Nov 1852). The chief manager fully intended to revive his cherished project the following summer, but before he could do so the company's board of directors, dissatisfied with his overall performance, summoned him back to St. Petersburg "for explanations concerning his administration" (RCR 20/1387:601-602, 10 Nov 1852).[62] Receiving the summons on 28 March 1853, Rozenberg yielded the chief managership to his assistant, Aleksandr I. Rudakov, on 31 March and sailed for Aian aboard the ship *Nikolai I* on 2 June of that year (RCS 34/72, 74, 339, 438:fo. 45-46, 359v-360v, 149v, 29 and 31 Mar, 30 May, and 12 Jun 1853). In his hasty departure, he failed to pass on to Rudakov any instructions regarding dispatch of the expedition he had considered so essential (RCS 34/341:fo. 361v-362, 30 May 1853).

By the end of 1852 colonial officials had begun to complain of declining fur

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showed the Colville drainage to be completely separate from that of the Yukon. Though it differed from Teben'kov's chart in its details, the Richardson map, too, depicted the Yukon-Kvikhpak as a single great river which, from its headwaters in British territory, cut across the entire breadth of Russian America to empty into Norton Sound (Richardson 1851:204-208 and map).

[62]The company later maintained the fiction that Rozenberg left the colonies "due to family circumstances" (RCR 20/980:1007, 28 Aug 1853), and it has become established in the English-language literature that Rozenberg himself requested early retirement from the chief managership due to illness (Pierce 1972:46, 1990:433). The company correspondence surrounding his departure, however, makes no allusion to any such request. Rather, the directorate's correspondence with Rozenberg from November 1850 onward clearly reveals its growing dissatisfaction with and mistrust of his management decisions, culminating in the blunt summons to St. Petersburg "for explanations" two years later.

yields from the northern interior posts, particularly in fox, land otter, and marten, the furs for which market demand, and profits, remained strongest (RCS 33/738:fo. 503-503v, 23 Nov 1852, 34/476:fo. 164-164v, 19 Jun 1853). Blaming the traders at Fort Yukon, from that time forward they repeatedly cited British competition on the Kvikhpak as one of the major obstacles to company profit in the northern district. But while colonial chief managers Rudakov and Voevodskii continued to advocate the idea of a northern expedition through the summer of 1854, they did not share Rozenberg's preoccupation with locating the British post. Rather, prompted by repeated orders from the Main Office to stem the flow of furs to the Chukchi, they emphasized the need for comprehensive explorations which would broaden the company's geographical and commercial knowledge of the entire region. To their regret, neither of them found the means to implement this measure (RCS 34/341:fo. 360v-362, 30 May 1853, 35/92:fo. 41, 1 May 1854).

By 1855 Voevodskii had ceased to mention even the desirability of a special expedition to the north. In part this was because the problems engendered by the Crimean War, and the personnel shortages which persisted for a time thereafter, temporarily rendered such an undertaking impossible. More important, however, was a determined shift in policy in the chief manager's office. Voevodskii, apparently at the urging of the Main Office, now deemphasized efforts to locate and expel the foreigners trading in company territory, and encouraged instead more efficient and effective competition against all rivals in the trade. In so doing, he had reconciled himself to necessity; effective patrol of the colonies' extensive coastline and vast hinterland required resources far beyond the company's means.

As already noted, Voevodskii's strategy for improving the company's competitive position included raising the prices paid to Natives for the more desirable furs and diversifying his inventory of trade goods to include more Siberian and Native-made products. He also encouraged the traders at Mikhailovskii and Andreevskaia to make the rounds of local villages at times of the year when the Natives were most likely to congregate in large numbers. Such measures were no innovation, for they had been

incorporated into the company's northern policy off and on since the very founding of Mikhailovskii. Directed toward the interception of interior furs bound for Native coastal trade fairs, they had been employed with moderate success over the years, and there was every reason to believe that they would help the company to meet the challenges of intensified coastal competition in the future. As measures to intercept furs moving in the opposite direction, however, they had been largely ineffective, rendered even less so by policies then in effect with regard to the Nulato post.

Nulato odinochka, originally founded to intercept lower Koyukuk Koyukon and "Inkilik proper" (Lower Yukon Koyukon) middlemen as they carried furs from the upper Kvikhpak drainage to the coast, was also the Russian post best situated to draw the interior trade away from Fort Yukon. Unfortunately, in advising against trading trips to any but the nearest villages in the years after the Native attack of 1851, Rudakov and Voevodskii had withdrawn the post from direct participation in the upriver trade. Without trips to "Lake Mintokh" or, for that matter, much beyond the mouth of the Koyukuk River, it was as if the Nulato post had returned to the early 1840s, dependent once more upon lower Koyukuk Koyukon middlemen for most of its take in upriver furs. Yet even as the Koyukon traders assumed new importance for the Russians at Nulato, their status as the premier middlemen of the upper Kvikhpak/ middle Yukon was eroding. Increasingly, it was the Kutchin traders supplied by Fort Yukon who bought up the region's furs.

Changing Role of the Kutchin Traders

As noted in the previous chapter, the Kutchin whom Alexander Murray met on his arrival on the Yukon were already familiar with the fur trade. Though few of them had ever seen whites before, they were in possession of various British and Russian trade goods which they obtained through Native middlemen living to the east, west, and south. With the establishment of Fort Yukon in their midst, the Kutchin bands whose territory lay nearest the post, the Black River, Chandalar, Birch Creek, and especially the Yukon Flats Kutchin, suddenly had direct access to the white

traders and their goods. Soon the former middlemen were displaced from their role and the Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin began to emerge as the most powerful traders of the upper middle Yukon.

This reordering of trade relations between the Kutchin bands nearest Fort Yukon and their neighbors developed over the course of several years. First to lose their status as middlemen to the upper middle Yukon were the "Rat Indians" (Crow Flats and Upper Porcupine River Kutchin). It had been their practice to purchase furs cheaply on the Yukon and resell them at a profit at the Hudson's Bay Company's Peel River post. With the opening of Fort Yukon, the "Rats" found the local Kutchin much less willing to trade. Not only was it now convenient for the latter to visit a post themselves, but they quickly learned that the standard Hudson's Bay Company prices for furs were considerably higher than those the "Rats" had been offering. Thus cut off from their major source of furs, the "Rats" were soon known to the British traders primarily as providers of caribou meat and muskrats, the resources in which their home territory abounded, and as middlemen to the Eskimos[63] (HBC 1851:fo. 236v).

The Han, too, found their trade patterns disrupted. Before the establishment of Forts Yukon and Selkirk, they had been last in a chain of Native middlemen who linked the fur producers of the upper middle Yukon to the posts and trading vessels of

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[63]Too late did Hudson's Bay Company officers realize how great a portion of the Peel River returns had come from the Yukon through the "Rat Indians." While ruefully admitting that they now bore the expenses of two establishments to secure the same furs they had formerly collected with one, they recognized even in 1852 that they could not rectify the situation simply by abolishing or moving Fort Yukon (HBC 1851:fo. 236-236v). The "channel of trade" between the Yukon and Peel River had already been "diverted from its old course" (HBC 1851-53:114) and would prove difficult to reestablish because "the Youcon Indians have the greatest possible contempt for the Rat Indians now that they know the price of the furs and goods, and find how much they were formerly cheated by them" (HBC 1853:fo. 75).

Alaska's southern coast (Murray 1910:82).[64] As had occurred in the case of the "Rat Indians," the opening of Fort Yukon dried up one of their sources of furs. At the same time, however, the post offered the Han more direct access to trade goods than had previously been available to them. They quickly adjusted to the change, trading furs and meat to the Hudson's Bay Company post for various manufactured goods, and bartering beads and dentalium shells to the Kutchin for such things as metal kettles, obtained in trade from the Eskimos, and guns (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 8, 1849-50a:fo. 2v-3, 4). It appears that the Han exchanged one middleman role for another, offering their southern trading partners manufactured goods rather than furs for the dentalium shells and other items which still sold well on the Yukon.[65]

After his first year of operations at Fort Yukon, Alexander Murray no longer worried about competition from the "Rats" and Han. The Native middlemen who offered trade goods from the west held his attention somewhat longer. Their source of supply was relatively close at hand, it was rumored that they offered better prices than could the British, and the furs they procured went to one of the Hudson's Bay Company's major rivals, the Russian-American Company. Murray's first goal was to

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[64]A passing remark by Murray (1910:28-29) suggests that the Han position in the trade may already have been changing at the time of Fort Yukon's founding. While at La Pierre House en route to the Yukon in June of 1847, he met "five Indians, all the way from the Youcon...[who] had been up towards the source of *Porcupine river* trading furs from the 'Gens du fou'...intending to dispose of them to the Russians in the Youcon this summer..." (emphasis in original). He also mentions that a few Han were known to visit the Peel River post (Murray 1910:52, 82).

[65]Many of the Han nearest Fort Yukon died of diseases of an unspecified nature in the summer of 1847 and the winters of 1848-49 and 1850-51, as well as in the scarlet fever epidemic of 1865-66 (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 3, 6, 9, 1849-50a:fo. 1, 1850-51b:fo. 23, 1865-69:59; Murray 1910:51, 59). The effects of these population losses upon Han participation in the trade warrant further research in the Hudson's Bay Company records, which were not readily accessible when Osgood (1971) was compiling his landmark study.

wean the Yukon Flats and Birch Creek Kutchin[66] from their dealings with their neighbors to the west. Subsequently, he and his successors hoped to reverse the flow of furs altogether, to attract to their own post the former middlemen and with them the peltry of all the tribes of the vast western hinterland.

As previously noted, throughout his first season in the region, 1847-48, Murray lamented his small stock of the most popular trade goods. Once he had run out of beads, he found the Yukon Flats and Birch Creek Kutchin reluctant to sell him any more furs. Instead, some of them set off early in the spring of 1848 to meet the "Gens de Butes" (Tanana drainage Athabaskans), to whom they bartered many furs for Russian beads (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 35-35v, 39).

In Murray's second season of trade, 1848-49, the post's small allotment of beads and guns, meant to last a full year, was quickly exhausted, and within a month the majority of the "lower band," or Yukon Flats Kutchin, were off again to sell their excess furs downriver (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 6, 1848-49b:35). Still others intended to take their furs downriver in the spring. That winter, however, Murray received and quickly spread the news that he would have more guns and an adequate supply of beads come July 1849. On the strength of this promise, some of the Yukon Flats Kutchin decided to revise their trading plans. In early June of 1849, soon after the opening of navigation, a party led by a man Murray called "the Little Chief" set out to attempt to purchase furs *from* the Gens de Butes before the Russian trading boat could arrive (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 24, 27v).

This first attempt by the Yukon Flats Kutchin to redirect the trade was apparently unsuccessful. The Gens de Butes and "another small band this side of the Snow Mountains" (below Birch Creek?) met and traded with the Russians as usual,

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[66]Here and below I use the term "Birch Creek Kutchin" to mean a Kutchin band whose territory included at least part of the Birch Creek drainage, but who may represent a local band of Yukon Flats Kutchin rather than the group known as Birch Creek Kutchin in the ethnographic literature. See the entry for "Kootcha-Kootchin" in Appendix 1 for a discussion of this definitional problem.

and it was a member of the latter band who accepted trader Vasilii Deriabin's note for delivery to Murray (HBC 1849:fo. 487v-488, 1849-50a:fo. 4v, 1849-50b:44). The party led by the Little Chief, very likely the twelve flintlock-armed strangers whom Deriabin met among the Native traders below "Lake Mintokh" that summer, returned from their sojourn among the "Russian Indians" not with furs, but with threats that they, too, would take their trade downriver unless Murray began to pay more for meat and peltry (HBC 1849-50a:fo. 5v-6, 8). Murray held his ground on prices, but complained bitterly to his superiors of the long reach of his Russian competitors (HBC 1849-50b:45).

Due to the Russians' continued ability to attract the trade of the downriver Natives, Murray's larger outfit for 1849-50 did not raise his returns as much as he expected. In the summer of 1850, however, he began to detect hopeful signs of change. Among those who came with furs to await the arrival of the outfit for 1850-51 were two of the Gens de Butes, neither of whom had ever visited Fort Yukon before (HBC 1850-51b:fo. 3). Soon after, eight of the "Middle Band" (Birch Creek Kutchin) brought in meat and furs to trade. To Murray's surprise, they announced that they would not be going to meet the Russians as usual, in part because they had been disappointed the previous year, in part because they had that winter fought with "another band between them and the sea," of whom they killed fifteen men and five women, and feared retaliation (HBC 1849-50a:fo. 16v, 1850-51b:fo. 3v).[67] Equally encouraging was the visit of another downriver Native whose fellows habitually dealt with the Russians. The stranger bartered a few furs for ammunition and tobacco and, well satisfied, promised to return in the autumn with others of his party who might have furs. For them Murray set aside his last few guns in hope of permanently luring

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[67]This appears to have been but the latest episode in an ongoing conflict between the Birch Creek Kutchin and the Koyukon, for in March of 1849 the "middle band" had tried to get some of the Fort Yukon-area Kutchin who had guns to join them in a war against the "men of the shade" ("Teytseh Kootchin," Koyukon Athabaskans) (HBC 1848-49a:fo. 21). See, however, Mishler (1986:7-8), who suggests that the victims of the winter battle of 1849-50 were Dihai Kutchin.

one more party away from his Russian competitors (HBC 1850-51b:fo. 5-5v).

Some of the Yukon Flats Kutchin, too, were becoming more successful in their attempts to divert the downriver trade. The Little Chief and his brother continued to hold Murray's attention in this respect. Though they had received two guns apiece from the new outfit, each of them tried to purchase a third with furs obtained from the "lower Indians." In this instance it is not clear from context whether Murray meant by "lower Indians" the more distant downriver Natives, to whom these leaders went as middlemen, or fellow members of the Yukon Flats Kutchin for whom these two men acted as agents. In either case, he did not approve, believing that all Natives should bring in their own furs rather than profit a go-between. On these grounds, and because he was reserving the guns for the newcomers expected in the fall, Murray refused the leaders' demands (HBC 1850-51b:fo. 5-5v).

Undeterred by Murray's recalcitrance, the Little Chief and his party returned in October 1850 with marten obtained from some of the "distant Indians," and in December they set out well supplied with beads to trade with the Gens de Butes. There followed several months during which most of the Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin wintering below Fort Yukon were occupied with moose and caribou hunting, but at the end of March, 1851, another trading party set out downriver. Soon thereafter a large party of Gens de Butes visited the Kutchin below the fort, sold them many furs, and, with the Kutchin, set off again to fetch more pelts (HBC 1850-51b:fo. 13v, 15v, 20, 21).

Murray was disappointed in that his returns for 1850-51 scarcely exceeded those of the previous season--the increase in furs from downriver had barely offset the decline in local production. His disappointment would have been still greater had he known that Kutchin success in the middle Yukon trade that year had not perceptibly injured the business of his downriver Russian rivals. Despite disruptions in Native trade patterns in the wake of the Koyukon attack upon Nulato that spring and subsequent cancellation of the Nulato trader's annual trip upriver, both possible factors in the decision of the Gens de Butes to sell their furs to the Kutchin, the Russian posts

on the Kvikhpak had enjoyed a slight increase in returns.

Within a year, the Russian Kvikhpak trade had indeed fallen off sharply, and Russian colonial officials were blaming the decline upon British competition. An equally sharp rebound in the Kvikhpak trade in 1852-53, however, suggests that temporary factors--pockets of winter famine in the interior, continued suspension of Russian trading trips upriver out of Nulato, and, especially, management difficulties at Nulato itself--rather than British and Kutchin competition had been largely responsible for the drop (HBC 1851-52:fo. 16-16v, 1851-53:184; RCS 33/738, 768:fo. 503-503v, 535v-537, 23 Nov 1852). Still, colonial officials had good reason to suspect the British post of diverting the trade.

For several years following their initial success, Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin middlemen set out each winter on trading expeditions to "distant Indians" and returned to Fort Yukon each spring with the furs they had purchased. Moreover, the post's new manager, William Hardisty,[68] redoubled his predecessor's efforts to convince "distant Indians" to visit Fort Yukon in person. By the summer of 1852 stories of Fort Yukon and, apparently, an influx of goods from that post were troubling the Russian trader on the Copper River, far to the south (HBC 1855a:fo. 438; cf. Doroshin 1866:386-387).[69] By the summer of 1853 Hardisty had opened

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[68]Hardisty, whose mother was of Native (Algonquian?) ancestry, entered Hudson's Bay Company service in 1842 at the age of about twenty. He spent his entire company career in the Mackenzie River District, retiring in 1878 (Brown 1980:209, 215 pl. 20, 1982; Lindsay 1993:151-152 n. 64). He prided himself on his knowledge of the region's Native languages and his ability to obtain information directly from the Natives rather than through an interpreter (HBC 1851:fo. 236).

[69]In July of 1852 Andreian Ponomarev, summer trader on the Copper River, enlisted a Native messenger to carry a note to his unknown rivals. Handwritten in Russian, it reads (my translation):

> What is your name[?] Russian or English[?] From the [Russian-American] Company or Hudson's [Bay] Company[?] I am from Mednovskaia [Copper River] odinochka. My name is Andreian Ponomarev. July 2, 1852. (HBC 1855a:fo. 438)

trade relations with visitors from two distant downriver peoples, the "Taitsa Koochin" (Koyukon Athabaskans between the mouths of the Tanana and Koyukuk Rivers) and an Athabaskan group near the mouth of the Tanana River whom he called the "Vunta Koochin,"[70] and was hoping to attract some of the "Keetla Koochin" (Athabaskans of the upper Koyukuk River) within a year or two (HBC 1853:fo. 75v, 77; fo. 77 also reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57).[71] Without themselves ever descending the Yukon River farther than a few days' travel on foot below their post, the British had extended their trade to the Russians' very doorsteps.

For his part, post manager William Hardisty was most pleased to see members of the "Taitsa Koochin" and downriver "Vunta Koochin" among the Natives assembled to greet the supply boat in July of 1853. They brought a considerable number of "excellent Prime furs," in exchange for which they wanted only guns, beads, and tobacco. Hardisty feared that he would not have enough guns and beads to pay for the unexpectedly large quantity of beaver and marten he found waiting for him, but was determined to win the newcomers' future trade. At the risk of angering some of his regular customers, he settled up first with the strangers, who, leaving well satisfied, promised to return (HBC 1852-56:23[b], 25, 1853:fo. 75v, 1853-54:fo. 1).

It reached Fort Yukon in 1854, by what route we cannot tell, and was, like Deriabin's note, sent on to London for translation. Hudson's Bay Company officers appear to have treated the translation, a fair one, as merely an item of curiosity; their correspondence surrounding it gives no indication of concern or of any attempt to reply (HBC 1853-55:99-100, 1855a:fo. 436v, 1855b:265-266). Quite obviously, the Russians were no longer considered a threat to the Yukon River post.

[70]Not to be confused with the Crow Flats Kutchin, known to the Hudson's Bay Company by the same name. The problem arises from the propensity of Fort Yukon's personnel to extend descriptive Kutchin designations to neighboring peoples who were not Kutchin-speakers. Thus, Vunta Kutchin, "men of the lakes," could equally well describe both the people of Crow Flats and the people of the lower reaches of the Tanana.

[71]In 1853 the "Keetla Koochin" were still "deterred from visiting [Fort Yukon] through fear of the Youcon Indians, with whom they were formerly at enmity" (HBC 1853:fo. 75v). For a Koyukon oral tradition which may relate to this enmity, see Clark (1974:186).

For more than a year already, Hudson's Bay Company officers had been debating the value of Fort Yukon. Hardisty's success in drawing distant Natives to his establishment in 1853 bolstered the argument for maintaining the post in its central location for at least a few more years. The furs received from the distant visitors, recorded as late returns on Outfit 1852, had boosted the post's receipts for 1852-53 above £2,000, higher than in any previous year. Hardisty advised his superiors that, if the "Taitsa Koochin" continued to visit him, and if he could draw the "Keetla Koochin" to trade as well, he might within a few years raise the post's average annual returns to £2,000 or even £2,500, whereas if he moved his establishment far upriver, as they were considering, he would no longer be within reach of the very peoples from whom the majority of furs could be expected (HBC 1852-56:52, 1853:75-75v).

Even Hardisty, however, saw little prospect of annual returns in excess of £2,500. He allowed that profits might increase slightly if he were to encourage all distant Natives to forsake the local middlemen and deal with the post directly, but for the time being he was reluctant to do so. Without the trade, he reasoned, the "Koochakoochin" (Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin) would no longer be able to afford firearms and ammunition for hunting meat, primarily moose, and without their hunt the post would go hungry (HBC 1852-56:52). He soon learned that, food supply aside, it would be no easy matter to cut the Kutchin middlemen out of the trade.

The Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin middlemen had indeed been angered by Hardisty's preferential treatment of the visitors from downriver in the summer of 1853. It had been they, after all, who had facilitated the meeting. At Hardisty's request they had the previous year brought a representative of one of those distant peoples to the post to introduce him to the wonders of the Hudson's Bay Company trade (HBC 1851-52:fo. 14v, 1851-53:182, 184, 1852-56:25). Now, when that introduction was bearing fruit, it appeared that the post manager intended to push them aside in favor of his new contacts. Moreover, Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin had engaged in battle against "Taitsa Koochin" on more than one occasion (HBC 1847-48a:fo. 7, 12, 1848-49a:fo. 21; Murray 1910:67, 87-88). In showing prefer-

ence toward the latter in trading the limited supply of guns at his disposal, Hardisty was potentially arming an enemy against them.

Perceiving Hardisty's behavior as a threat to their own position in the trade, to the wealth, power, and prestige it had brought them, and perhaps to the physical safety of their people, the Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin middlemen began to assert greater control over access to Fort Yukon by downriver Natives. Members of the two distant peoples visited the post again in the summer of 1854, but were treated so badly by the local Kutchin that, much to Hardisty's disappointment, they failed to return the following year (HBC 1852-56:130). When the post manager, still hoping to expand his direct contacts, enlisted two local Natives to investigate the possibility of opening trade with an unnamed distant tribe, they accepted readily enough, but, unlike before, returned only with favorable reports rather than with some of the strangers themselves (HBC 1855-56:fo. 42). These and similar incidents brought Hardisty to the realization that his de facto partnership with the Kutchin middlemen would not conveniently fade away when he no longer considered it necessary. What had initially been an expedient means to divert the downriver trade toward Fort Yukon had become an obstacle to the larger and, in his opinion, more desirable goal of establishing direct trade relations with all the peoples within the post's reach.

As Hardisty felt himself increasingly isolated from contact with the primary fur producers, he began to complain to his superiors of the "rapacity and dishonesty" of the local Kutchin traders who, he claimed, wandered about visiting distant Natives at their winter camps or intercepted them on their way to the post and forced them either to accept very low prices for their catch or to give up their furs altogether. At the very least, Hardisty found his lack of contact a hindrance in making known the company's preferences in the manner of dressing furs. More important, he was convinced that the heavy-handed tactics of the middlemen actually discouraged fur production by the distant Natives, who, he believed, would put greater effort into the hunt if they could receive full Hudson's Bay Company prices. Most of all, it irked him that one Native group should, as he saw it, make its living off the labor of others,

rather than conduct its own fur hunt and thus further augment the post's returns (HBC 1852-56:130, 1856:379-379v).

Given the harsh tone of Hardisty's early complaints against the middlemen, it is somewhat surprising to note that the post's annual returns during those years were rising to unprecedented levels. By 1855-56 they had reached more than £4,500, nearly double the trader's most sanguine projections of only a few years before. Hardisty, of course, would not attribute the success to the exertions of the Kutchin middlemen--he even gloated when "the Chief's brother" returned in April of 1856 with relatively few furs from a winter trip to the Gens de Butes, daring to hope that the latter group would soon resume direct trade at the post. Instead, he credited the power of the post and its goods to draw the trade of distant Natives "in spite of" the middlemen's tactics, and by the end of 1856 was feeling sufficiently confident to inform his superiors that, in his opinion, the trade of the region could finally be said to be entirely in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC 1855-56:fo. 42v, 1856:379-380).

Hardisty's boast would scarcely have surprised the Russian traders downriver. Though the quantity of furs purchased by Mikhailovskii redoubt and its subordinate posts had quickly returned to normal after the poor season of 1851-52, the quality of furs coming into the posts had noticeably declined. Not until 1854-55, however, when post managers began to exercise stricter control over the quality of beaver pelts they were willing to purchase, could Russian-American Company officials truly gauge the extent to which their trade in the region had eroded. The take in beaver promptly dropped by more than half and declined still further in the following season. At the same time, despite every effort to encourage Natives to bring in more of the valuable land otter, lynx, silver and cross fox, and marten pelts, the take in those furs grew only slightly, remaining well below what post managers believed the region could produce. Company officials were convinced that they were still losing many of the best furs both to the coastal Chukchi trade and to the upriver English ([Kostlivtsov]

1863:Appendix 10; RCS 35/230:fo. 96-97, 98, 17 Jun 1854, 37/147:fo. 65, 9 Apr 1856).

Only a year later it was the Russians who had reason for cautious optimism with regard to their northern trade, while the manager of Fort Yukon railed anew against the influence of the Kutchin middlemen. For some reason unknown to Hardisty, the Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin traders did not go as usual to meet the "distant Indians" in the summer of 1857. Since they had over the previous several years successfully discouraged most direct contacts between the distant peoples and Fort Yukon, their decision to forego their annual trading trip meant the post's loss of the distant trade for the 1856-57 season. Hardisty, basing his estimate upon his record returns of the previous year, judged that this seeming capriciousness on the part of the middlemen had cost his post more than three thousand marten, plus other furs, valued at more than £2,000 (HBC 1857:fo. 262b-c). Among the apparent beneficiaries of this sudden reversal were the Russian traders of the Mikhailovskii district, who were enjoying "more comforting" results than they had seen in several years. Though they did not gain as many furs as Hardisty believed he had lost, they recorded a significant rebound in purchases of prime beaver and a season's take in marten which hovered near one thousand pelts, a number unprecedented for their district ([Kostlivtsov] 1863:Appendix 10; RCS 39/154, 273:fo. 62v, 109v, 6 and 14 May 1858).

While we have no statistical data for Fort Yukon for the years 1858-59 and 1859-60, the tone of Hudson's Bay Company correspondence for those years suggests that the post's fur returns continued at the same disappointing level through the end of the decade. At the same time, there is evidence to suggest that the volume of furs traded toward the west was again on the rise. The fur returns of the Russians' Mikhailovskii district continued to improve, especially in marten, in which the annual take soon approached two thousand pelts. Moreover, if we may believe the Russians' own complaints, this remained but a fraction of the interior furs which Native trade networks annually carried to the traditional coastal trade fairs and to the outside traders and whaler-traders who were then beginning to frequent the Alaskan shores of

Bering Strait and the Chukchi Sea.

Hardisty appears at first to have given little thought to the possibility that his "lost" furs were going to competitors. The distant coastal trade had never been a concern of his, and he had dismissed the Russians as serious rivals since 1853, when Native visitors from afar had brought news of the attack upon Nulato and subsequent suspension of Russian trading trips upriver (HBC 1853:fo. 76v, 1857:263c). He was inclined instead to attribute his lower returns to something he had long predicted, an absolute decline in fur hunting by the distant Natives in reaction to the plundering treatment they received at the hands of the Kutchin middlemen (HBC 1856:fo. 379v, 1857:262d-263a). Yet even when he began to suspect that some of those distant peoples had merely redirected their trade toward the Russians, he remained firm in his conviction that it was the predatory behavior of the local Kutchin which had driven them into the arms of his rivals (HBC 1859-65:fo. 8v).

Hardisty was by now thoroughly convinced that he must break the middlemen's hold on the downriver trade if Fort Yukon was to remain a viable post. No longer would he hesitate to cut the Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin out of the trade simply because their meat hunt was important to post subsistence. Though surviving records indicate that these hunters were still his major suppliers of meat, the post manager was already laying plans to obtain more of his provisions from the Chandalar Kutchin and "Rampart Indians" (Crow Flats Kutchin) (HBC 1857:263a-b). Nor would he continue unquestioningly to adhere to the company's longstanding prohibition against sending post personnel any great distance downriver lest they provoke a confrontation with Russian traders or elicit diplomatic protests. In light of the Russians' long silence with regard to Fort Yukon and continuing absence from their former trade rendezvous upriver from Nulato, that policy seemed to him overcautious. Having exhausted all more subtle means of circumventing the middlemen, he proposed a radical solution to the problem: reestablishment of Fort Yukon far downriver, well beyond Kutchin territory, and, until that could be accomplished, annual company trading expeditions directly to the downriver peoples (HBC 1858-62:fo. 11v).

Hardisty's superiors were not prepared to authorize construction of a new post so deep in Russian territory, but enthusiastically approved a summer boat excursion downriver for the purpose of trade (HBC 1858-62:fo. 17v). Hardisty hoped to launch the first such expedition in the spring of 1859, shortly before he was to retire as manager of Fort Yukon. When the time came, however, he found he had but one serviceable boat, and that was needed for the spring and late summer transport of furs out to La Pierre House (HBC 1859-65:fo. 8v). It would be several more years before his successor found the means to initiate this potentially significant change in the conduct of the trade.

CHAPTER 6
THE TRADE OF THE 1860S

The 1860s were difficult years for the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies, a time when both firms had to face the fact that, at least in North America, the days of the government-chartered trading monopoly were numbered. By the close of the decade, the Russian-American Company had entirely withdrawn from the continent and was in liquidation. Though the Hudson's Bay Company fared somewhat better, it had by decade's end surrendered much of its land and given up some of the privileges that set it apart from other mercantile enterprises of the period.

The Crimean War had marked a turning point for the Russian-American Company. Though many factors, both political and financial, prompted the Russian government's decision to dispose of its North American possessions, it was recognition of the colonies' utter indefensibility in the event of war or invasion that initiated serious consideration of such a proposal (Bolkhovitinov 1990:104-119, 183-221; Okun 1951:242-252, 257-267). The protracted negotiations to sell the colonies to the United States were conducted in relative secrecy. In the meantime, certain factions in the government focused public debate upon the company itself, which would be largely superfluous if the colonies were sold.

Ostensibly, the impetus for discussion of the company's future was the fact that its third twenty-year charter was due to expire in 1862. From 1860 onward the company's directors, who favored continuation of the status quo, found themselves continually on the defensive against attacks on the company's right to monopoly and charges of maltreatment of the Aleuts and colonial mismanagement. From mid 1861 the firm continued in operation solely by authorization of a special imperial decree while the government "studied" the question of charter renewal (Bolkhovitinov 1990:119-142; Okun 1951:253-256). At the same time, uncertainty over its future caused the company great difficulties in obtaining the loans it needed in the normal

course of business, depressed the price of its shares on the St. Petersburg stock exchange, and in general disrupted its finances (Bolkhovitinov 1990:137, 183 n. 43; Gibson 1987:274-278, 293; Okun 1951:250-253).

Though the government and the company's shareholders reached agreement on the main points of a new twenty-year charter in the spring of 1866, the charter itself was never issued (Bolkhovitinov 1990:138-142; cf. Gibson 1987:275-276; Makarova 1979:267-268, 1987:67). By late in the spring of 1867 the agreement by which Russia sold its American colonies to the United States had been ratified, and soon thereafter the company began to liquidate its colonial holdings (Bolkhovitinov 1990:259-282; Makarova 1979:270-272, 1987:71-73; Pierce 1973:24-29).

The Hudson's Bay Company, too, saw significant change in these years. In mid 1863 a majority of its directors sold their shares to an outside investment group, the International Financial Society, which thereby gained a controlling interest in the firm. Within a few weeks the group had managed to buy up most of the remainder of the old shares, and early in 1864 the Hudson's Bay Company's reconstituted governing committee issued new stock that quickly sold to eager investors. The new stockholders, drawn by a prospectus that emphasized landholdings fit for colonization and mining, expected the company to concentrate upon development of those assets rather than upon the fur trade. Though the latter remained the firm's chief source of income, it was no longer its primary interest (Rich 1959:815-816, 836-848).

Shareholders who had hoped for quick profit through disposal of Hudson's Bay Company lands situated in the "fertile belt" were soon disappointed, for in 1869 the company yielded to pressures from the British government and the Dominion of Canada and surrendered to the Crown all territorial rights in British North America. The relatively small amount of cash and the fraction of lands within the fertile belt that it received in compensation were of little comfort to the speculators. The generous blocks of land it was granted around its occupied posts did, however, allow the firm to continue in the fur trade as before (Morton [1939]:849-852; Rich 1959:888-892, 936).

While the change in management and the surrender of charter rights did not impede the Hudson's Bay Company's fur trade in these years, neither did they advance it. Preoccupied first with stock deals, then with protection of corporate interests in the land negotiations, the firm's governing committee was not inclined to promote aggressive development of the trade. Conservatively managed, that trade continued to bring the company a steady, if modest, return.

The uncertainties confronting the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies throughout the decade were reflected in their management of the Yukon trade. With much of their creative energy directed toward self-preservation, neither firm was prepared to pour resources into a major program of expansion in the north. Each sought to hold its own in the Yukon drainage trade and, when the opportunity arose, tried to increase its share at the expense of its competitor. But as the vagaries of the trade favored first one company, then the other, neither had the resources to transform its short-term advantages into permanent gains.

The Northern Trade

Mixed reports of the Russian-American Company's northern operations reached Sitka in the autumn of 1859. Though overall fur returns from the Mikhailovskii district were no longer so dismal as they had been several years earlier and the take in marten had registered another satisfying increase, prospects for continued success in the region seemed poor. Problems with coastal competition had multiplied as local managers were forced to contend not only with the long-troublesome intercontinental trade of the Chukchi and their middlemen, but with increasing numbers of foreign whaler-traders who offered the Natives firearms and other manufactured goods in exchange for furs. Likely related to this intensification of the coastal trade was a growing enmity between the Maleimiut (Iñupiaq) and Kvikhpagmiut (Yup'ik) middlemen active on the lower Kvikhpak River, a situation which threatened both the safety and trading success of any Russian posts caught in the middle. At the same time, the Hudson's Bay Company remained annoyingly active on the upper Kvikhpak. If the

Russian firm could not soon find solutions to the most basic of its problems in the north--chronic shortages of skilled and trustworthy traders and of the goods most in demand--it appeared to be in danger of losing the region's trade altogether.

Johan Hampus Furuhjelm,[72] the company's colonial chief manager since June of 1859, had no innovative solutions to offer. Rather, throughout his five-year administration he emphasized a continuity with the northern policies of the past. In particular, he sought guidance in the policies of chief managers Etholen and Teben'kov, who had striven to make of the northern district a functioning whole which would extend the trade far beyond the confines of the individual posts. In so doing, he hoped to revive that spirit of enterprise which had all but disappeared from the company's northern operations in the troubled decade just ending. Of the policies of his more immediate predecessors in office, he promoted those which most closely fit his vision of a company actively defending and expanding its position in the region's trade.

Furuhjelm's first concern in the north was the company's loss of furs to the coastal and intercontinental trade. Concluding that "the trading affairs of the Russian-American Company along the coast of the Bering Sea have reached the point where it is necessary either to strengthen our means there or to abandon as unjustified expenses all the Company's solicitations toward development of [that] trade," he proposed to resurrect either the company's shipboard trade in the region or the plan to establish a permanent post somewhere in the vicinity of Kotzebue Sound (RCS 42/189:fo. 48v, 2 May 1860). In May of 1860 he commissioned Lieutenant Fedor K. Verman, commander of that year's northern transport (the steamer *Imperator Aleksandr II*), to investigate the feasibility of such an undertaking.

Verman's assignment was three-fold. On finishing routine business at Mikhailovskii, he was to visit Mechigmenskii Bay and the islands of the northern Bering Sea to ascertain where and when the Chukchi met with Alaskan Natives, what they

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[72]In Russian, rendered Ivan Vasil'evich Furugel'm.

exchanged, which peoples acted as middlemen, and how a company vessel might best infiltrate the trade. While in those waters he was to try to purchase, for later resale by Mikhailovskii redoubt, those Chukchi products most in demand among Natives of the Alaskan mainland. And, if time allowed, he was to examine Kotzebue Sound and vicinity to identify a site suitable for a company post which could intercept the Alaskan furs bound for Asia (RCS 42/189:fo. 48v-49v, 2 May 1860).

While the lieutenant did not manage to visit Kotzebue Sound (RCS 43/121:fo. 37v, 21 Mar 1861), he learned enough on his voyage north to recommend a course of action. He agreed with Furuhjelm that the best way to divert the intercontinental trade would be to stock all northern posts with the Chukchi products Alaskan Natives considered indispensable. To assure a supply of those products, he suggested establishing a post among the Chukchi themselves, on Mechigmenskii Bay, for example, a good anchorage located near several settlements of reindeer herders and a known stop for Chukchi traders on their way to American shores. In addition, he recommended maintenance of a small trading vessel which from spring to autumn could make the rounds of Ukivok (King Island), the Diomede Islands, and the American coast from Port Clarence to Kotzebue Sound, purchasing both furs and Chukchi products. Whether such a venture would repay its expense, however, he left to the judgement of the company's directors (Verman 1863:596-597).

Company officials, at that time desperately trying to improve the firm's financial and political standing, apparently found little promise of profit in the proposals, for they dropped the project entirely. No more would the annual northern transport attempt to conduct incidental trade and exploration along the shores of Bering Strait. Nor was there any more talk of opening a post on Kotzebue Sound. If the company was to trade there at all, it would be through some trustworthy Native agent dispatched by the manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt (RCS 43/327:fo. 97v, 20 Jun 1861).

Furuhjelm had not intended the shipboard trade, or even a new northern post, to be the company's sole means of discouraging the transfer of furs to Asia. His

primary hope still lay in the existing network of company posts. Taking his cue from the orders issued by his immediate predecessor, he admonished the manager of the Mikhailovskii district, Maksim Vakhrameev, to pay more attention to this aspect of the trade and to spur local managers to greater activity.

The chief manager knew that it would be self-defeating to try to hinder the trade of Native peoples among themselves. He hoped instead to keep the northern posts so well stocked that the Natives would find trips to their customary trade rendezvous on the coast unnecessary. In order to make arrangements to supply the necessary goods, he required from Vakhrameev samples of the Chukchi and other coastal products in circulation, price lists, and detailed information on volume, timing, and locations of the Chukchi trade. In the meantime, he urged the district manager to find ways to increase Native demand for textiles, tea, and sugar, even paying the Natives more in such goods than prescribed in the official tariff if this would encourage consumption. For manufactured goods for which there was already a strong demand, Vakhrameev was to hold to the established tariff, lest such items be devalued in Native eyes. Furuhjelm reminded him, however, that any profit gained through underpaying the Natives for their furs was mere illusion if the practice discouraged Native dealings with the Russian posts (RCS 42/195:fo.53v-55, 2 May 1860).

Over the next few years Vakhrameev worked diligently to increase the company's trade contacts along the lower Kvikhpak. From the autumn of 1860 he regularly set off on inspection trips to the district's outlying posts, trading as he went. Supply boats traveling between posts received orders to stop and trade wherever they found Natives gathered. And, when jealous Maleimiut middlemen began to prevent the Ingalik Athabaskans from taking their furs to the Russian posts, Vakhrameev not only dispatched traders directly to the Ingalik villages, but obtained permission from Furuhjelm to maintain a temporary two-man station on the Gol'tsovaia (Golsovia) River, the Ingalik route to the coast (Netsvetov 1984:411 ff.; RCS 43/41:fo. 20-24v, 15 Mar 1861, 44/265:fo. 121v-122, 17 Nov 1862).

The Maleimiut traders remained the most troublesome of the Russians'

competitors for furs reaching the coast. Long prominent as middlemen in the Chukchi trade, they had by now assumed a similar role in the trade with foreign vessels. Personnel of the Mikhailovskii district were ever watchful for signs of Maleimiut enmity, and there were occasional unpleasant confrontations, but for the most part company managers trusted in peaceful means to hold and expand their share of the northern trade (Netsvetov 1984:462; RCS 45/265:fo. 64, 18 May 1863). To this end, Furuhjelm had in 1861 authorized another increase in the prices district posts could pay for furs and urged Vakhrameev himself to become a middleman in the local trade in "deerskins" (most likely reindeer skins) (RCS 43/151, 327:fo. 49v-50, 97, 21 Mar and 20 Jun 1861). Furthermore, the chief manager finally began to relax the rules on dealing in one of the very items most likely to draw Natives to the Russian posts, ammunition for firearms.

Company policy had long prohibited sale of firearms and ammunition to Natives in the colonies. While the rules were sometimes bent in Tlingit and Tanaina territory, where the Natives had already obtained firearms from other sources, company managers enforced the prohibition for as long as possible in the north. There, only Natives working for the company were issued guns, and then only for a specific purpose such as a hunting expedition to provision a post. When the need had ended or the Natives left company employ, the guns had to be returned.

In the early 1840s Zagoskin had urged that the ban be lifted, at least for the Natives of the interior. In his opinion, fears that firearms would promote bloodier Native feuds and widespread overhunting were greatly exaggerated. If the region were wisely administered, he argued, possession of firearms could only help the Natives in their subsistence pursuits (Zagoskin 1956b:280-281, 1967:270). There is no indication that company officials gave the proposal any serious consideration at the time. In fact, the company's third charter, approved in 1844, for the first time specifically prohibited sale of liquor, firearms, and ammunition to Natives on the grounds that these items might be harmful (charter reproduced in Tikhmenev 1863:62-63, 1940:99).

By 1856, however, and perhaps as early as 1853, firearms supplied by foreign traders were becoming sufficiently common in the region to prompt the Mikhailovskii district manager himself to request permission to sell guns and ammunition at company posts. The chief manager's office flatly rejected the proposal, but over the next few years found it increasingly difficult to justify such a policy (RCS 35/230:fo. 98, 17 Jun 1854, 38/264:fo. 76, 24 May 1857). When Lieutenant Verman investigated the situation in the summer of 1860, he found the coastal gun trade already well entrenched and costing the company a considerable amount in lost furs. This might be prevented, he thought, if company vessels were to patrol the coast, but even that would not stop loss of furs to the English who sold guns on the upper Kvikhpak. The only solution seemed to be that the Russian-American Company, too, should begin dealing in firearms (Verman 1863:597-600).

Furuhjelm, reluctant to take so drastic a step, began with a minor concession. In 1861 he authorized the sale of percussion caps, as an experiment, and then only at Mikhailovskii redoubt (RCS 43/327:fo. 97v, 20 Jun 1861). Though he declined to liberalize this policy the following year, by 1863 the northern post managers had convinced him that the sale of powder and lead was essential to Native welfare if not to company profits (RCS 44/210:fo. 64v, 4 May 1862, 45/265:fo. 63v, 18 May 1863). As the chief manager explained to the home office,

> Perceiving from reports of persons who have visited Mikhailovskii redoubt that all the savages of the North have firearms obtained by them from foreigners, and that, having become accustomed to them, they often suffer hunger from lack of powder, I have now ordered the manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt in extreme cases to barter powder to the savages for furs, strictly [*sobstvenno*] with the goal of averting the starvation which sometimes occurs among them due to lack of the means to obtain deer [caribou] and other animals. (RCS 45/217:fo. 45, 7 May 1863)

How frequently the "extreme cases" occurred, which Native groups obtained ammuni-

tion from this source, and the new policy's overall effect upon the Mikhailovskii trade are not recorded.

THE MIDDLE YUKON TRADE, 1860 TO 1865

The reports and tallies of the 1859-60 season, received in Sitka in the autumn of 1860, reminded the chief manager that the loss of furs to coastal competitors was not the Russian-American Company's only problem in the north. A sharp drop in fur returns from the Nulato post that year indicated troubles in the northern interior trade as well. In large part, Furuhjelm blamed local post managers for the decline, accusing them of maltreatment and impudence toward the Natives and of general laziness. Also clearly a factor, coastal trade aside, was continued competition from the English established at Fort Yukon (RCS 43/41:fo. 23v-24, 15 Mar 1861).

Furuhjelm had every reason to believe that his reforms directed at the coastal trade--larger stocks of the goods locally in demand, higher prices for furs, and admonitions to post managers to treat Natives more respectfully and to carry the trade to local settlements--would serve also to improve the returns from Nulato. As in former times, he hoped that this post could skim off a substantial portion of the upriver furs which lower Koyukuk Koyukon middlemen still funnelled to the coast. On the other hand, the chief manager strongly suspected that a significant portion of each season's furs from the interior no longer came downriver at all, but passed instead to the English. To reclaim that share of the trade, he proposed to resurrect two projects that had been suspended during the troubles of the 1850s: the expedition to locate Fort Yukon and the annual trading trips to "Lake Mintokh."

The man Furuhjelm chose for the trip to Fort Yukon was the creole Ivan Lukin. Son of a Native woman and the creole Semeon Lukin, manager of Kolmakovskii redoubt, Ivan had spent his formative years in the trade of the Kuskokwim River drainage and was intimately familiar with the Native languages and lifeways of that region. On his father's death in 1855, he himself had been appointed manager of Kolmakovskii, but by 1859 was in trouble for misappropriating company furs. For

this offense, he was stripped of his position and transferred to Mikhailovskii redoubt, where he would be under closer supervision[73] (Netsvetov 1984:471; RCS 42/193, 200:fo. 52-53v, 56, 2 May 1860).

When Furuhjelm first issued the transfer orders in May of 1860, it was his intent that Lukin be employed in general trading expeditions from Mikhailovskii into the interior. By August, however, he had decided that the creole's talents and experience uniquely suited him for a more ambitious assignment. Through the winter mail he instructed Vakhrameev to order Lukin to ascend the Kvikhpak, locate Fort Yukon, and gather intelligence on English trade operations there. Furthermore, he wanted the creole to attempt the long-proposed crossing from the Kvikhpak to the headwaters of the Copper River, or one of its tributaries, and descend to the company post on Prince William Sound, whence he could obtain passage to Sitka. He left it up to Lukin to decide whether he would accept such a challenge, but promised him fitting reward if he would agree to go (RCS 42/46:fo. 135-136, 5 Aug 1860).

By the spring of 1861 Furuhjelm had somewhat revised his proposal, deleting any reference to the Copper River leg of the expedition, but reiterated that Lukin or some reliable substitute should undertake the trip to Fort Yukon as soon as possible (RCS 43/327:fo. 97-97v, 20 Jun 1861). That summer or autumn Vakhrameev made the necessary arrangements, and in the spring or early summer of 1862 Lukin set out up the Kvikhpak, apparently from Nulato. In keeping with Furuhjelm's orders, he was accompanied not by regular company employees, but by local Natives.

In the American historical literature, creole Ivan Lukin is remembered as "the

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[73]Misappropriation of furs was not the only problem of the younger Lukin's administration. When Furuhjelm issued the transfer orders he had not yet heard of the near mutiny, led by two of Ivan's brothers-in-law, over food shortages at Kolmakovskii in the spring of 1860 (Netsvetov 1984:402, 471). And though the transfer was originally scheduled to take effect in the spring of 1861, further, unspecified, transgressions by Lukin himself prompted Mikhailovskii manager Vakhrameev to dispatch his replacement somewhat earlier, in December 1860 (Netsvetov 1984:415, 417; RCS 43/327:fo. 97v, 20 Jun 1861).

first recorded white man to ascend the Yukon from the sea and establish definitively that the British Yukon was in fact the Russian Kvikhpak" (Webb 1985:44). To his superiors in the Russian-American Company, who on the basis of Native testimony had long been reasonably sure that the two rivers, if not identical, were at least within a single drainage, Lukin's accomplishment was rather less impressive. Furuhjelm duly thanked him for the trip and issued the promised rewards--two hundred rubles (nearly half a year's salary) to Lukin and fifty rubles to the Koyukon toyon "Soroka," leader of the Native participants[74]--but to Vakhrameev he complained of the expedition's meager results.

Particularly vexing in the report which reached Sitka was the lack of specifics regarding the goods, pricing, and volume of the English trade, the very information Furuhjelm needed in order to formulate an effective plan of competition. Hoping that Lukin had learned more than the report indicated, the chief manager urged Vakhrameev to question him closely on those topics (RCS 45/265:fo. 64, 18 May 1863). Surviving company records do not mention whether Vakhrameev elicited the desired details.

The company's first attempt to resume trading trips to "Lake Mintokh" appears to have been equally disappointing. Having received authorization for such trips in the summer of 1861, Vakhrameev equipped a small trading party for the following spring. Unfortunately, the 1862 party did not manage to leave Andreevskaia odinochka until mid June (O.S.), several weeks later than the traders had formerly set out upriver from Nulato. Given the lateness of their start and the extra distance they had to travel, the Russians could not have reached the various upriver trade rendezvous until well after the Natives had dispersed for their summer subsistence activities.

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[74]"Soroka" or Ivan Khoiaikhlel' was from Tlitol'nit village, located somewhere above Nulato on the Koyukuk, the Yukon, or one of their tributaries. The Russian Orthodox missionary hieromonk Ilarion, who baptized Ivan and his family at Nulato in June of 1863, estimated him to be about forty years old (ARCA 1863a:fr. 496, 1863b:fr. 440). Note that these details are omitted from the summary of Ilarion's journal published by Oswalt (1960).

We do not know whether the party even bothered to push on beyond Nulato. That the 1862 trip was a commercial failure is implied both in the record's silence regarding its results and in Furuhjelm's encouraging words to Vakhrameev regarding a similar trip planned for 1863: "I hope that this time [*nadeius' chto v etot raz*] your efforts will be crowned with success" (Netsvetov 1984:440; RCS 43/41:fo. 21-21v, 15 Mar 1861, 44/210:fo. 63v-64, 4 May 1862, 45/265:fo. 64, 18 May 1863).

The 1863 trip was indeed crowned with success. This time the party, consisting of Nulato post manager Pavel Mikriukov and three employees, set out by baidara from Nulato early in June. They were still a little below "Lake Mintokh" (*nemnogo ne doshli do ozera Mentog*) when the Natives, tired of waiting at the intended rendezvous, came down to meet them. The Russians returned to Nulato on 13 June (O.S.), laden with 1,453 furs of various types. Among those receiving rewards for this trip and for diligent trading in general was the toyon Soroka who, on an equal footing with the regular employees, was granted 60 paper rubles in credit (ARCA 1863a:fr. 496; RCS 45/359:fo. 91, 8 Oct 1863, 46/149:fo. 25v, 5 May 1864).

Even before Furuhjelm received news of the happy outcome of the second trip he had decided that the expedition to "Lake Mintokh" should once more be an annual event. On dispatching Sergei Stepanovich Rusanov ("Sergei Stepanov") north to replace Vakhrameev in the summer of 1863, he warned the new district manager that the region's best furs were still going to the Chukchi, foreign vessels, and the English. To counter their influence, he exhorted Rusanov to keep his posts well stocked with the goods in local demand, to see that his traders treated the Natives kindly, and to conform to the Native seasonal round, customs, and habits in scheduling his trading expeditions. On the latter point, he stressed that regularity, visiting the same Native gathering places at the same time each year, made for the most profitable expeditions.

Most of Furuhjelm's specific recommendations dealt with annual expeditions out of Andreevskaia odinochka to intercept the coastal trade. To counter the English trade he mentioned only two: a trip no later than early May from Andreevskaia up the Chagliuk (Innoko) River at least as far as Kholia-Kachagmiut (Holikachuk--see

Netsvetov 1984:500), above which the Natives were rumored to have begun trading with the English, and a trip on breakup of the Kvikhpak from Nulato to "the large Lake." In accord with these recommendations, the Nulato post continued to dispatch an annual spring trading party to "Lake Mintokh" through 1865 (RCS 45/263:fo. 60v-61v, 18 May 1863, 49/91:fo. 48, 8 May 1867).[75]

The Hudson's Bay Company traders at Fort Yukon were not immediately aware of the Russians' revitalized interest in the region east of Nulato. To James Lockhart, post manager from mid 1859 to the summer of 1862, the Russian traders downriver appeared no more enterprising than they had been in the time of his predecessor, William Hardisty. That is not to say that he wholly discounted them as rivals. He had no doubt that the furs of the middle Yukon would go to the Russians should the Natives of that region ever become dissatisfied with trade at the English post. Lacking any evidence of Russian activity among his downriver customers, however, he shared Hardisty's opinion that the overbearing behavior of local Kutchin middlemen was more likely to alienate the middle Yukon Natives than was Russian competition per se (HBC 1859-65:fo. 8v).

It was in keeping with this assessment that Lockhart should continue his predecessor's efforts to cut the Kutchin middlemen out of the downriver trade. Dispatch of a company trading boat down the Yukon each spring still seemed the most feasible means of maintaining direct contact with the region's fur hunters. Unfortu-

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[75]It is unclear whether the Russian party actually reached "Lake Mintokh" in 1864 and 1865 or, as in 1863, was met en route by Natives descending the Yukon. Even the surviving papers of hieromonk Ilarion, who accompanied the traders bound for "Niklogoet Island" (see note 77, below) and "Lake Mintokh" in the summer of 1864, shed no light upon this. While the priest did baptize the toyon and six other people from "Mentog settlement" on that trip, his parish descriptions suggest that he himself did not travel that far upriver. Lacking his travel journal for that year, we are left to wonder whether the party turned back before reaching its intended destination or simply proceeded on without hieromonk Ilarion as he busied himself with potential converts who had gathered at one of the lower trading points (ARCA 1863a:fr. 515, 1864a:fr. 485 [corrected 1865a:fr. 512], 1864b:fr. 391).

nately, the post still had no boat to spare. Unable to repair one of the old post freight canoes for this purpose, the frustrated Lockhart had to content himself with the hope that Fort Simpson would soon send him a boat builder (HBC 1858-62:fo. 55v).

The 1861 trade only underscored the need for a regular downriver trading expedition to insulate the post's fur returns from the vicissitudes of Native inter-band relations. Due to the murder of a "lower Indian" by an "upper Indian" at Fort Yukon the previous summer, the downriver Natives had feared to put in an appearance during the 1861 season. And since the latter were the post's chief source of marten skins, the English traders procured considerably fewer of those valuable furs than was usual. Without a reliable means of going directly to his suppliers, Lockhart could do no more than complain (HBC 1858-62:fo. 55v, 1859-65:fo. 39v).

Bernard Ross, head of the Mackenzie District, did not hold these failures against Lockhart, who was in fact promoted to the rank of chief trader and scheduled to leave Fort Yukon late in the summer of 1862. Rather, he blamed the post's previous manager, William Hardisty, for short-sightedness in not having an extra boat built while he had a carpenter on staff (HBC 1858-62:fo. 42v, 55v, 79). But if Hardisty was, in fact, at fault, he soon had a chance to redeem himself. In mid 1862 he replaced Ross as district head.

Hardisty had not lost his conviction that Fort Yukon must control the down-river trade if it was to remain a viable post. He laid great stress upon this point in his instructions to Strachan Jones, Lockhart's assistant and designated successor. Moreover, with his new authority, he was in a better position to see to it that the post had the means to pursue that goal. He promised to send Jones a carpenter in the spring of 1863 to construct the long-desired boat and assured him that the outfit being dispatched to Fort Yukon for that year was "a very full one...quite adequate to meet all the requirements of the trade etc." (HBC 1858-62:fo. 80v-81).

Lockhart and Jones, meanwhile, had their own reasons for thinking that the Fort Yukon trade might be looking up. In the summer of 1862 "some forty of the Russian Indians" (Koyukon?) and their chief visited the post. Pleased with their

reception and the trade goods offered, they promised to return en mass the following year. This unexpected development, together with reports that several of the nearby Native groups had plenty of furs on hand, gave Jones good reason to anticipate a very brisk trade in 1863 (HBC 1859-65:fo. 65-65v).

There were, however, two concerns that somewhat dimmed Jones's optimism. The first was the possibility that the post would not have enough of the most desired trade goods to satisfy all the Natives who brought in their furs. The 1862 outfit had been far too small to pay for all the furs offered, and many were left in cache at the post. The 1863 outfit, though indeed larger than usual, appeared pitifully inadequate by the time Jones had paid for those stockpiled furs. Even after begging two extra cases of beads from the Peel River post, he was unsure whether he would be able to meet the demands of the coming summer's trade (HBC 1859-65:fo. 56, 65v).

Of less immediate concern were initial indications that the Russians, after years of seeming indifference, were again taking an interest in the middle Yukon. Ivan Lukin's arrival at Fort Yukon in the summer of 1862, perhaps in the company of the aforesaid "Russian Indians," did not generate the panic it might have some fifteen years earlier, for the post was now too well established to be threatened by the appearance of a single Russian in an unarmed canoe. Indeed the Russian creole, by ancestry more than half Native himself, may have blended in so well with the post's other visitors that Lockhart and Jones learned of his presence only after the fact. When Jones finally reported the incident to his superiors in June of 1863, he gave it only passing mention: "A Russian visited the Fort last summer--I heard from the Indians this spring that the Russians intend to send up a boat, with no hostile intentions, however" (HBC 1859-65:fo. 65v). Yet, in light of his apprehensions about the size of his 1863 outfit, even the slightest sign of Russian interest in the local trade was troubling.

Jones soon found his fears to be more than justified. Though he was "overwhelmed with martens" in the summer of 1863, he had not the goods to pay for them. Both the "Gens du Fou" (Han) and the "Gens du Butte" (Tanana drainage Athabas-

kans) took many of their furs away with them, the latter declaring that they would not visit the post again. The "middle Indians" (people downriver of Birch Creek?) were "furious because they could not get enough tobacco." Of the band of "Lower Indians" Jones had counted on seeing, only the "chief" and seven others forewent the Russian trade to visit Fort Yukon, and they, too, left disappointed. Finding the post out of guns and ammunition, and unwilling to accept payment entirely in beads, they retained most of the furs they had brought.

Altogether, Jones estimated that the shortcomings in his 1863 outfit had cost the Hudson's Bay Company "upwards of 4000 Martens, besides Beaver and other furs," as well as untold losses in future trade. All the disappointed Natives were talking of taking their furs to the Russians. As Jones understood the nearest Russian post to be just six days' travel downriver, he took such talk very seriously. Native reports that the Russians had that very summer sent a trading boat to the mouth of the Gens du Butte (Tanana) River, and promised to do so every summer, only heightened his anxiety.

The post manager was fairly confident that, given a reasonably large outfit for 1864, he could hold the trade of the local and upriver Natives. If he could fill their needs at Fort Yukon, it would not be worth their while to travel the extra distance to meet the Russians. The Gens du Butte and Lower Indians, still the post's chief source of marten, were another matter entirely, for if the Russians came to them, they would likely find the trip to Fort Yukon unnecessary.

Jones's one ray of hope on that front was the Lower Indians' apparent preference for the British traders or their goods. As he explained it to Hardisty, the eight Lower Indians who had visited the post that summer "promised that if I would go down I should get the whole of the Martens Foxes and others, if I would take them all, in preference to the Russians tho' they (the Russians) trade at the same tariff as the H B Co." The long-delayed boat trip, once merely desirable, now seemed absolutely indispensable (HBC 1859-65:fo. 78v-79, 1862-67:fo. 32v).

So determined was Jones to retain the downriver trade that he considered

snowshoeing to the mouth of the Gens du Butte (Tanana) River early in the spring of 1864. There is no evidence that he did so. Instead, he somehow managed to convince one of the local Kutchin leaders, Chutsugvitti, to take him down in a canoe.[76] According to the Reverend Robert McDonald, Anglican missionary at Fort Yukon, Jones, Chutsugvitti, and "about a dozen others," evidently Natives, set out down the Yukon on 25 May (N.S.), some five days after the ice cleared from the river near the post. The party was absent nearly a month, returning only on 23 June (HBC 1859-65:fo. 78v; McDonald 1861-65:25 May, 23 Jun 1864).

In terms of trade, the trip was apparently rather disappointing. The post manager told Reverend McDonald that, though he had penetrated some 100 miles below the confluence of the "Tununa" with the Yukon, he had not seen many Natives at all (McDonald 1861-65:23 Jun 1864). This is curious, for a journey of such length would have taken him past several of the trade rendezvous that had become important to the Russians–the fabled Lake Mintokh, the "island Niklogoet,"[77] and perhaps even the mouth of the Nowitna River. We can only suppose that many of the Natives, uninformed of the Fort Yukon delegation's intended visit and not expecting the Russians for another week or two, had not yet left their spring camps to gather at the accustomed trading points along the Yukon.

No matter what Jones may have thought his arrangement with Chutsugvitti had been, the willingness of some of the local Kutchin to take him down the Yukon did not necessarily signify their readiness to relinquish control of the downriver trade. Quite the contrary, it was likely an action calculated to enhance their middleman

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[76]When Chutsugvitti died of scarlet fever at his camp on Birch River (Birch Creek) in November of 1865, missionary Robert McDonald characterized him as "a man of some repute among the kutcha-kutchin" who had been a great medicine man before converting to Christianity (McDonald 1865-68:8 Nov 1865).

[77]Apparently *Noo Chuh Gholoyet* ('point of the big peninsula'), the point of land formed by the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers, east of the Tanana's mouth (Jones 1986:45). The several American-era trading posts called "Nuklukayet" derived their name from this locality, but none was located on the point itself (Turck and Turck 1992).

status. When in earlier days Kutchin had escorted distant "chiefs" to Fort Yukon, it had not been to throw open the trade, but to impress upon both their guests and the Hudson's Bay Company personnel the importance of their own position. On such occasions the visitors had seen first-hand the great wealth of goods to which the Kutchin traders could give them access, while the post managers had gained an appreciation for the breadth of the trade network they could tap through their Kutchin contacts. The trip downriver in 1864 was similar in character and should have gained the escorts a similar measure of respect and prestige.

Viewed within this context, the post manager's actions upon his return could scarcely have been more inappropriate. In his eagerness to win over the downriver Natives, he apparently traded most of his guns, powder horns, and tobacco to those of them who visited Fort Yukon later in the summer. When his local customers asked for the same items, he had far too few left to satisfy them. He also began to lay plans for his 1865 trading expedition, plans independent of any input by local middlemen. Jones himself had made an agreement with the "Lower Indians" to come to them in mid summer when the salmon were running, while post interpreter Antoine Hoole had been telling all visitors from downriver to expect a company boat at first open water "in order to be before the Russians." The trip's timing would largely depend upon how early Jones could receive the necessary goods out of his new outfit (HBC 1859-65:fo. 91v, 1862-67:fo. 58v).

The Kutchin nearest Fort Yukon were quick, if indirect, in expressing their displeasure over the trader's impolitic behavior. When in the autumn of 1864 Jones tried to make the usual arrangements for the post's winter subsistence, local hunters refused to supply him with meat. There was little danger that the post would be starved out, for Jones also had a standing arrangement to purchase caribou meat from the Chandalar Kutchin, but the state of his food supply gave the trader some uneasy moments as he waited for the Chandalar hunters to make their first appearance that fall. To his dismay, Jones also found the local Kutchin quicker than usual to raise all the grievances, large and small, that they had been storing up against him. Particular-

ly upsetting was a complaint by "the Black River chief" that he had not been paid for a significant number of skins. Though he risked alienating the chief and perhaps his entire band, the post manager could not bring himself to pay what he considered to be an unjust claim (HBC 1859-65:fo. 91, 1862-67:fo. 49v, 58v).

While Jones could see no real cause for his multiplying problems, there was no denying that something had gone terribly wrong in his relations with the local Natives. With the autumn mail he dispatched a letter begging his superior, William Hardisty, to return to the Yukon to straighten out the mess:

> I think Sir that matters have come to such a pass at the Youcon as to render it imperatively necessary for you yourself to come down here next spring before the trading commences. It would be of little service to send one of your Officers as he could have no influence over the Youcon Indians. (HBC 1859-65:fo. 91)

At the same time he realized that, even should good relations be restored, his own future effectiveness in the region had been hopelessly undermined. Pleading illness, he asked to be replaced in the spring by his assistant, James McDougall.

Hardisty did not know all the particulars of the local situation and could not travel all the way to Fort Yukon to investigate, but in reading between the lines of Jones's reports, he concluded that most of the post manager's problems were likely rooted in too blatant a show of preference for the trade of the downriver Natives. He did advise Jones to examine more thoroughly the claims of the Black River chief, for it had been his own experience that the Native traders were seldom in error in such matters. Beyond that, it seemed the most prudent course to accede to Jones's request for a transfer out of the region and appoint assistant manager James McDougall his successor. Since the Natives had as yet voiced no complaint against McDougall, there was reason to hope that he would soon be able to "restore order and come to a proper understanding" with local Kutchin leaders (HBC 1862-67:fo. 49v, 58v).

His imminent departure from the region did not deter Jones from completing the downriver trading trip he had planned for early in the summer of 1865. While

surviving records do not indicate how far downriver the trader reached, who participated in the trip, or how profitable the venture was, post account books do note that eight Native "boys" were each paid twenty Made Beaver[78] in trade goods for a "trip down the Youcon w/boat" (HBC 1864-65:fo. 10v, 1862-67:fo. 82). Also undocumented is what understanding, if any, post manager McDougall reached with Kutchin traders regarding downriver commerce. If local Kutchin leaders remained angry about Fort Yukon's newly active role in that segment of the trade, it was no longer so apparent in their economic relations with the post. In sharp contrast to the preceding autumn, they and their fellows kept McDougall and his men well provisioned all summer long (HBC 1865-69:43).

The Middle Yukon Trade, 1865 to 1867

In any contest to be the first to reach Native trade rendezvous along the middle Yukon in the spring, the English traders had a distinct logistical advantage over their Russian rivals. Not only did a favorable current speed the outbound leg of their journey, but, because the upper course of the river cleared of floating ice and debris a week or so earlier than the lower course each spring, they were able to get an earlier start on the trip. It was, of course, possible to arrive at the various rendezvous too early, as Strachan Jones had discovered in 1864, but that had likely been a problem of poor communication. In subsequent years the downriver Natives, given adequate forewarning, proved quite willing to gather in considerable number to meet a trade boat sent down from the English post soon after first open water. With a jump of five or more days on the Russians, the Fort Yukon traders could complete their business and set out on their return trip before the Nulato boat could arrive.

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[78]The Made Beaver, a prime winter beaver pelt, had been the Hudson's Bay Company's standard unit of value since shortly after its founding in 1670, despite the fluctuating monetary value of beaver pelts per se. The values of all other furs, as well as of trade goods, were denominated in Made Beaver (Rich 1958:76). At Fort Yukon and elsewhere in the north, the company's set price for a common flintlock gun was twenty Made Beaver.

Had the various groups of Natives who gathered at the spring rendezvous traded as a bloc, the Fort Yukon traders might finally have succeeded in stopping or significantly curtailing the flow of furs from the middle Yukon drainage to Nulato and the coast. Those Native peoples, however, retained an independence of action that continued to deflate hopes that any one party could so easily monopolize the region's trade. As illustrated by surviving descriptions of the trade of 1865 through 1867, many a factor could still influence Native trading decisions and neutralize any advantage gained by representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company in being first to arrive in the spring.

For the Hudson's Bay Company, the major factor affecting the trade of the winter of 1865-66 was an epidemic of scarlet fever that took a terrible toll in Native lives. The infection had been brought to the Mackenzie District by the brigades delivering supplies that summer. When the Peel River and Yukon boats came down to Fort Simpson in mid August to pick up their posts' shares of the supplies, all of their crewmen were exposed both to the fever and to a concurrent outbreak of influenza. The latter struck the crew first. To wait out the illness would have risked being frozen in for the winter before reaching home, so the boats set out on their return on schedule. When they passed through Fort Good Hope on 7 September, the boats were drifting with the current "without a man fit to pull an oar." Two days out of Fort Good Hope, several of the crewmen began to exhibit the first unmistakable symptoms of scarlet fever (HBC 1862-67:fo. 68v-69; McDonald 1865-68:17 Aug, 2-9 Sep 1865).

William Hardisty, Mackenzie District manager at Fort Simpson, received no more news of the boats after they left Good Hope. He calculated that they must surely reach the Peel River post before freeze-up, but doubted whether the Yukon crew would be able to complete their journey by open water. This he considered rather a blessing, as it might keep the infection from reaching Fort Yukon and the relatively large number of Natives who traded there (HBC 1862-67:fo. 69). Unfortunately, the exertions of the boat crews for once exceeded his modest expectations.

Three days out of Fort Good Hope the boats had reached the (Arctic) Red River, where they met a few families of local Kutchin. Taking on three new crew members to replace three sick who stayed behind, they had continued on to Peel River accompanied by a few canoes of Natives. They made the post on 12 September, but did not tarry. On 14 September the Yukon party, augmented by three Natives hired at Peel River to help carry cargo, set out across the portage to the Yukon drainage. Arriving at La Pierre House on 18 September, they paused only long enough to reload the boats, and by the next morning were again on their way. As the party floated down the Porcupine River, most of the Native crewmen taken on at La Pierre were laid low with fever. Aided by the current, however, they pushed on, stopping at several Native camps to purchase provisions along the way. When the boat finally reached Fort Yukon on 28 September, several of the crew were still extremely ill (McDonald 1865-68:10-28 Sep 1865).

Two of the Black River Kutchin joined the boats at the last camp at which they stopped before reaching Fort Yukon, and the party found a few visiting Han at the post when they arrived. Within little more than a week, representatives of most of the other Native groups with whom the post had regular dealings had also put in an appearance--the Birch Creek and Yukon Flats Kutchin, the Chandalar Kutchin, and the "Ttyoni," who apparently lived somewhere downriver of Birch Creek. All, of course, were exposed to scarlet fever. As they finished their business at the fort and dispersed to their winter camps, they unwittingly carried the fatal infection with them (McDonald 1865-68:27 Sep-8 Oct 1865).

By 13 October, nearly thirty people at the fort, Native and white, were ill with fever and two Natives had died of it. Soon thereafter reports of sickness and death began to filter in from the Native camps as well, first from those lying closest to the post on the Yukon, Little Black River and Birch Creek, then from those more distant at Black River and in the Chandalar country. It was almost December before the epidemic showed any sign of abating in the vicinity of Fort Yukon. By then post manager McDougall was already estimating that nearly half the local Natives had

died, though he had not yet received any news of the effects of the disease upon the Chandalar Kutchin or the "middle Indians" (people downriver of Birch Creek), whom he expected to be equally hard hit.

By mid February of 1866, the fever had claimed its last victims at the post and among the Natives with whom Fort Yukon maintained winter contact. Only with commencement of the spring trading season did McDougall begin to receive reliable news of the effects of the epidemic upon the more distant peoples with whom the post had regular dealings. As nearly as he could calculate once all reports were in, at least 170 Natives of both sexes and all ages had died: 48 "Youcon Indians" (Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin), 19 Black River Kutchin, 33 Chandalar Kutchin, 22 "Gens de Millieu" (the "Middle Indians," downriver of Birch Creek), 26 "Rat Indians" (most likely Crow Flats Kutchin), and 22 Han (HBC 1865-69:43, 59; McDonald 1865-68:3 Oct 1865-13 Feb 1866).

As nearly as can be determined, few of the other Athabaskan peoples living west of the Russian-British boundary were touched by the disease. Down the Yukon River itself, the epidemic does not appear to have spread beyond the peoples of the Yukon Flats. To the north, two "Siffleux" (Dihai Kutchin) visiting the Chandalar Kutchin that winter may have carried the infection to their home territory northwest of Chandalar country (McDonald 1865-68:5 Jan 1866), but there is no evidence that it was subsequently transmitted to the Koyukon of the upper Koyukuk River drainage. To the south, beyond Han country, the epidemic may have penetrated as far as the Copper River, where a "powerful infection (like grippe)" was reported to have killed many in February of 1866 (RCS 48/207:76v, 23 Sep 1866). But while the disease could easily have spread into the Tanana drainage from that same direction, the evidence suggests that it died out well before reaching the Natives of the Tanana's lower course.

The widespread sickness and high Native mortality quite understandably affected Fort Yukon's trade. The year's fur returns, tallied in November of 1865, came to only about half of what they had been a year earlier. While some of the

decline was likely due to the friction which had developed between local Natives and the head of the post in the last months of Jones's administration, the weak autumn trade following Jones's departure was more readily attributable to the epidemic.

As was to be expected, that fall and winter the post took in considerably fewer than usual of beaver, fox, and otter skins, the furs most commonly hunted or trapped by the local Natives. But the long-distance fall and winter trade in marten skins was also down, this despite the fact that most of the post's marten came from peoples the epidemic did not reach. A temporary slowing of that segment of the trade could be blamed in part upon the deaths of "the most persevering of those belonging to the Youcon tribe, who were accustomed to visit the distant Indians in search of fur." Also a factor, however, were the frightening rumors that spread much farther than the epidemic itself and checked any of the distant Natives who might have considered visiting the post in person (HBC 1865-69:43-44; McDonald 1865-68:5 Jun 1866).

The apparent beneficiaries of this temporary disruption in the fall and winter trade pattern were the downriver Russians. The Mikhailovskii district yielded more furs in the fiscal year running from the summer of 1865 through the spring of 1866 than in any previous year. The company was particularly pleased with a take of nearly 3,500 marten skins, a record number for the district. Dmitrii P. Maksutov, who had taken over as colonial chief manager in May of 1864, attributed the success to the diligence of Mikhailovskii manager Sergei Stepanov (Rusanov). Rusanov had not only ordered the dispatch of trading parties out from the various posts within his jurisdiction, but had that winter continually traveled about the district himself (RCS 48/207:fo.72v, 23 Sep 1866). Considering the uncommonly large yield of marten, which the Russians, like the English, usually obtained in direct or indirect commerce with the Natives of the middle Yukon drainage, it is likely that a temporary reorientation of the middle Yukon trade in the wake of the upriver epidemic was an equally important factor.

In the 1850s William Hardisty had railed against local Kutchin control over the Fort Yukon trade, and opined that the situation would not improve until the senior

generation of middlemen died out. If the scarlet fever epidemic had, in fact, killed many of the "most persevering" of the local Native traders, the solution to Hardisty's old problem was suddenly much closer at hand. Curiously, there is no indication that the Hudson's Bay Company traders at Fort Yukon tried to take advantage of the severe local mortality to consolidate direct trade relations with the downriver Natives.

Perhaps the company traders were afraid that they would be perceived as the cause of the recent epidemic and received with hostility. Perhaps post manager McDougall had finally reached some satisfactory compromise with the local Kutchin that he did not want to jeopardize through such callous behavior. Or, perhaps the post was simply caught unprepared to take action. For whatever reason, it appears that neither a company boat nor a post employee was dispatched to the downriver rendezvous in the spring of 1866. Instead, the downriver trade was left in the hands of two of the Kutchin middlemen best known at the fort, the Black River leader Bikeinechatti and the Yukon Flats leader Sahnyatti (*Shahnyaatti'*). With them went a Native canoe flotilla of unreported size and the Reverend Robert McDonald, who hoped to spread the gospel among those who annually gathered at the rendezvous.

The party left Fort Yukon on 1 June, a little over a week after the river cleared of ice. Arriving at the confluence of the Tanana River with the Yukon the evening of 4 June, they found a large number of "Tununkutchin" (Tanana drainage Athabaskans) and "Tetsikutchin" (Koyukon) already gathered. McDonald's traveling companions spent half the next day purchasing furs while the missionary talked to various of the assembled Natives about coming to Fort Yukon for Christian instruction. They refused to do so, citing fear of the recent epidemic there, but promised to visit the following year.

That evening, four Natives who had gone down to meet the Russians brought word that the Nulato trading boat could be expected within two days. The Fort Yukon party did not intend to linger that long. The next day they attended a feast hosted by the "Tununkutchin," and on 7 June they set out on their return trip. McDonald tried to convince some late arrivals at the rendezvous, twenty or more

"Kitlikutchin" (Athabaskans from the upper Koyukuk drainage), to accompany his party back to Fort Yukon, but they did not consider it worth their effort to fight the current all the way to the Hudson's Bay Company post. They intended instead to barter their furs to the Russians when they should arrive.

Just a day's travel above the trade rendezvous, a Native messenger overtook McDonald to deliver a note. It was from the leader of a small American exploring party who asked to accompany the traders as far as Fort Yukon. In order not to lose too much time in waiting, the missionary dispatched two young men to help the explorers ascend the river more quickly. Late that evening they returned with Frank Ketchum, Michael LeBarge, and their Russian interpreter and guide, the creole Ivan Lukin[79] (McDonald 1865-68:1-8 Jun 1866).

Ketchum and LeBarge were both members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, an ambitious venture by an American communications company to link North America to Europe by overland telegraph line. The line was to run from the United States up through what are now British Columbia and Yukon Territory, across Russian America and Bering Strait, and into Siberia to connect with the wire from Europe and European Russia. From 1865 to 1867, when the last of the field crews were notified of the success of the rival American Telegraph Company's trans-Atlantic cable, survey and construction parties worked at various points along the proposed route. The party with which Ketchum and LeBarge were associated was charged with exploring the Yukon River route from Nulato east to the former site of Fort Selkirk at the confluence of the Yukon and Pelly (Ray 1975a:157-167; Sherwood 1965:15-25, 30).

The Russian American division of the Telegraph Expedition had arrived at St. Michael in the autumn of 1865. In November the expedition's Yukon party transferred its headquarters to Nulato, from which it hoped to undertake a winter recon-

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[79]This was Lukin's second trip to Fort Yukon. I have located no documentary evidence that he made any additional trips to that post in the period 1860 through mid 1868 (cf. Black in Netsvetov 1984:471).

naissance of the route to Fort Yukon. In light of the scarcity of good sled dogs, however, it soon became apparent that the winter trip would be impossible. Instead, the party concentrated on freighting in its gear from Unalakleet and exploring the area immediately around Nulato (Adams 1982:130-133, 151). When the river ice began to break up in mid May, the two party members designated to explore the upper river were ready. Traveling separately in a three-hatch baidarka (kayak), Ketchum and LeBarge planned to accompany the regular Russian trading boat as far as Nuklukayet (*Noo Chuh Gholoyet*), the trade rendezvous near the mouth of the Tanana River, then continue on to Fort Yukon.

When the Russian party departed Nulato on 26 May, the Yukon was relatively clear of ice, but still rising rapidly and choked with floating driftwood. Pulling against a strong current, they took until 2 June to reach "Newikagut," the trade rendezvous at the mouth of the Nowitna River. There they found waiting a number of "lower Indians" (Koyukon?) who would be joining the Russians for the remainder of the trip upriver. It was Ketchum's impression that these Natives were afraid to travel to Nuklukayet alone, without a Russian escort, but it is more likely that it was the large Native escort that helped to assure Russian safety, while these experienced Native middlemen reaped any prestige to be gained in bringing "their" traders to the rendezvous. The Russians planned to stay over at least one day at the Nowitna. Unwilling to delay his journey any more than necessary, Ketchum decided that his own party should push on alone.

The group that reached Nuklukayet on 7 June consisted of Ketchum, LeBarge, and Lukin in their baidarka, two Natives hired at Nulato who paddled a canoe with the expedition's provisions, and another Native hired at the Nowitna to act as interpreter. They were greeted with cheers and the discharge of guns by the hundred or more men gathered at the rendezvous with their families. It was Ketchum's perception that two of the men there were "chiefs," one "made" by the English and the other by the Russians. To them he distributed gifts and, thus having smoothed the way, was easily able to find a pair of guides to replace the three downriver Natives who

were too tired, and too frightened by rumors of that winter's epidemic, to continue on to Fort Yukon.

Intent on completing his explorations, Ketchum had little interest in the trade rendezvous per se. When he heard that Reverend McDonald's party had only recently departed Nuklukayet for Fort Yukon, he dispatched a messenger ahead to ask them to wait, and set out upriver with his own party as quickly as possible. The combined parties reached the English post only on 21 June. It was early July, the end of the Russians' spring trading season, before the explorers returned to Nulato (Ketchum 1866).

Interestingly, neither McDonald's nor Ketchum's account of the 1866 spring trade mentions any rendezvous at the western end of the Yukon Flats, nor do Russian records mention trade at "Lake Mintokh" that year. Eclipsed by the trade rendezvous near the mouth of the Tanana, the locality had apparently already lost any former significance as a gathering place for those trading along the river. In fact, its decline in importance likely dates to within a few years of the establishment of Fort Yukon, when Kutchin middlemen began to extend their activities farther downriver and the Russians' Nulato post temporarily withdrew from the upriver trade. One suspects that the Russians' continued focus on "Lake Mintokh" in the early 1860s was more a reflection of their pre-1851 trade experience than of contemporary conditions. After the 1865 season, however, even the Russians ceased to mention the "Lake Mintokh" rendezvous. If they needed more than their experiences in the 1862 through 1865 trade to convince them that it was no longer necessary to travel that far upriver each spring, it was likely the rumors of local depopulation in the wake of the 1865-66 scarlet fever epidemic that finally decided them.

Neither the Russian nor the Hudson's Bay Company records provide any information on the relative success of the spring, 1866, trade at the mouth of the Tanana. The diary of one of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition members does, however, report second-hand that the Russians bought "an immense amount of sables etc....filling their baidara and two birch bark canoes full" (Smith 1865-67:11 Jul

1866). Even after allowing for exaggeration by an impressionable outsider, it appears that the Russians had enjoyed a satisfactory trade despite the fact that they had been latecomers at the rendezvous.

That autumn and winter the region's Russian-American Company posts implemented new measures intended to neutralize the Hudson's Bay Company's potential advantage still further. The measures were ordered by Chief Manager Maksutov, who spent the summer of 1866 in an inspection tour of all major posts in the colonies. The Russian-American Company, its charter expired, was increasingly under attack by those in court circles who wanted its monopoly abolished. Though Maksutov was far removed from the political infighting, he was not without a role in the company's struggle for survival. It was his task to try to improve the company's financial position, and thus silence at least some of its critics, by raising the efficiency of colonial operations and putting them on a more economical footing. He undertook his tour to gain a firsthand acquaintance with current operations at each of the company's regional centers, the better to recommend appropriate changes.

The first chief manager to visit Mikhailovskii redoubt while in office, Maksutov arrived aboard the annual supply vessel, the steamer *Velikii Kniaz' Konstantin*, early in August of 1866. He was pleased to find the post's accounts and files in order and praised manager Stepanov (Rusanov) for his diligence in procuring furs. He was less happy when a detailed inspection of the post's warehouse revealed a large stock of unsold goods, 17 thousand paper rubles' worth of which he ordered to be taken back to Sitka to be marketed elsewhere in the colonies. Though Mikhailovskii redoubt had been well supplied over the years with beads, dentalium shells, cotton handkerchiefs, and other items in local demand, the post managers' requisitions had often been insufficiently detailed in regard to the colors, sizes, styles, and quality preferred by the Natives. In a region long characterized by strong competition, the company could ill afford such an oversight. Maksutov ordered closer attention to such matters in the future.

An examination of the district's accounts revealed other problems. The chief

manager found that the trade conducted at Kolmakovskii redoubt did not repay the expenses of supplying and maintaining the post. He ordered it abolished. Andreevskaia odinochka, too, appeared to be superfluous, for most of that area's furs went either to Mikhailovskii or to Ikogmiut. Maksutov ordered the lower Kvikhpak post moved back to Ikogmiut. From this central location, trading parties could not only travel up and down the Kvikhpak and the "Chaliuk" (Innoko), but could easily cross the short portage into the Kuskokwim drainage, there to pick up the trade that had formerly gone to Kolmakovskii redoubt. Any coastal trade could be taken up by a party periodically dispatched from Mikhailovskii redoubt south to Cape Rumiantsev (Romanzof) and beyond. By these measures Maksutov hoped to reduce the district's expenses significantly.

The chief manager had another plan for Nulato. Aware that the Hudson's Bay Company traders were able to descend the Kvikhpak from Fort Yukon each spring before the river became navigable at the Russian post, he proposed to raise payment for winter marten traded there to 75 kopeks apiece in trade goods, the full amount authorized under the district's official price schedule. At that price he believed the Natives would readily sell their furs to the Russians over the winter rather than wait for the English to visit in the spring. He assured the company's directors that the increased yield in furs would more than compensate for the added expense. Besides, for marten the Natives were paid primarily in beads, *korol'ki* (large beads), dentalium shells, and other luxury items on which the company already imposed a large markup.

In conjunction with this plan to attract trade, Maksutov reaffirmed the rule that all posts should send trading parties out to Native villages rather than wait for the Natives to come to the posts. In particular, he believed that parties should go out during and immediately after the winter *igrushki* (festivals; messenger feasts) when the Natives congregated in large numbers and/or were in need of many things for which they were willing to trade furs. To encourage the Russian traders to take to the winter trail, he proposed bonus payments for each trip. Though this, too, would increase trading expenses, the chief manager believed the outlay would be more than repaid in

profits on the increased take in furs (RCS 48/207 and 42:fo. 72v-74, 140v-141, 23 Sep and 7 Aug 1866).

Finally, he authorized Rusanov to experiment with two new sources of revenue. Conceding to local demand and the recommendations of his managers, he had decided to allow post personnel to repair the Natives' firearms on request. In payment for this service they were to try to obtain primarily marten skins. And because mink had recently found a good market in New York, he instructed the district manager to build up the trade in a species of fur the company had previously been reluctant to accept (RCS 48/43:fo. 141v, 10 Aug 1866).

How successful these cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures were for the district as a whole is poorly documented in surviving Russian-American Company records, but Western Union Telegraph Expedition personnel noted a respectable traffic in marten at Nulato that winter. In mid December 1866 (N.S.) the season's first "Indians from a distance" arrived at the post. Among them was an "old chief" who brought in eight marten robes of twenty-four skins each to trade. Though he was not necessarily from Nuklukayet as the telegraph expedition members reported, he was evidently from somewhere upriver (Dall 1870:57; Whymper 1868a:175). At the end of the same month the Nulato post manager set out upriver by sledge on a trading trip of "several hundred miles." He returned early in the new year with some 500 marten (Dall 1870:59, cf. 179-180). It is, of course debatable whether these successes were attributable to the Russians' new marten prices, but it is clear that not all the Natives living upriver of Nulato were holding their winter marten for the Hudson's Bay Company and coastal traders who appeared in the spring and summer.

When later that spring two of the telegraph expedition members, William H. Dall and Frederick Whymper, joined the annual party bound from Nulato to the rendezvous at the mouth of the Tanana, they saw additional evidence of the upriver Natives' continued willingness to deal with the Russians. The party set out on 26 May 1867 (N.S.) when the river, still choked with floating ice and debris, was just barely passable. In one large skin boat equipped with a sail were Nulato post

manager Ivan Pavlov, seven workers, and a large quantity of goods and provisions. In a smaller skin boat were Dall, Whymper, and three local Natives who served as steersman and paddlers. Accompanying them were a number of local Natives in bark canoes, more of whom joined them at the mouth of the Koyukuk River (Dall 1870:77; Whymper 1867, 1868a:195-199).

As the Russians approached any inhabited place, they fired a salute to notify the Natives of their arrival. The first place they stopped for any significant trade, however, was Newicargat (Nowikakat) at the mouth of the Nowitna River, where they arrived the night of 3 June. Waiting for the party were an estimated 150 Natives. While the Russians traded for beaver, marten, and other furs, Whymper and Dall, preparing to travel by themselves as far as Fort Yukon, purchased some food supplies and a canoe and hired two Natives to handle the extra craft (Whymper 1867, 1868a:202-204, 1868b:230). It was at this stop that the telegraph expedition members noted the first clear material evidence of the Hudson's Bay Company's presence in the region. While the firearms of all the Natives who had accompanied them from the Koyukuk were double percussion guns obtained from traders on the coast at Kotzebue Sound, those in the possession of the Natives at Nowikakat were all English single-barreled flintlocks (Dall 1870:88).

The party tarried only a day at Nowikakat before moving on. They reached Nuklukayet four days later, on the evening of 8 June. Though it was reported that the Tanana Natives had not yet arrived, there were 120 to 150 people on hand to greet the traders. Among them was the "chief" who had brought the marten robes to Nulato in December, now dressed in Hudson's Bay Company finery[80] (Dall 1870:93-94; Whymper 1867, 1868a:210, 1868b:230-231). Whymper and Dall made note of the

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[80]Curiously, while Whymper referred to this man as "old" on meeting him in December, Dall declared on their June meeting that he was younger than any toyon (chief) he had yet seen. Still, both observers agreed that the "Nuklukahyet tyone" who had come to Nulato in the winter was the same one who now greeted them (Dall 1870:93-94; Whymper 1868a:175, 1868b:230).

hospitable welcome the party received at the rendezvous, but recorded little information on any trade that ensued. Instead they were preoccupied with arrangements for continuing their upriver trip.

Having heard from the Natives at Nowikakat that Antoine Hoole, interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Yukon, was trading at Nuklukayet, the two explorers were particularly disappointed to learn that they had just missed his party. He and "his Indians" had left only a day or two before, starved out by a shortage of food in the immediate vicinity. It was said, however, that he had managed to trade all his goods before leaving.

The telegraph expedition members had wanted to dispatch a letter to Hoole from Nowikakat, but their messenger had been dissuaded by tales of the danger he would face in making such a trip alone. Now they quickly sent someone after the Hudson's Bay Company party to ask it to wait for them, but to no avail. Hiring a local guide in place of one of the Natives they had engaged at Nowikakat, they parted from the Russians the evening of 9 June and proceeded to Fort Yukon on their own. They were accompanied by several canoes of Natives, among them a few Tanana River people (Dall 1870:86; Whymper 1867, 1868a:211).

Traveling at night and resting during the heat of the day, Whymper and Dall reached the Hudson's Bay Company post on 23 June. Post manager McDougall and most of his men were off to fetch the season's new outfit, but the local Kutchin were already beginning to congregate in expectation of their return. By the time McDougall's brigade arrived on 26 June the Reverend Robert McDonald, who had accompanied them from La Pierre House, was happy to find already assembled the majority of the Natives who had regular dealings with the post. He was particularly pleased to note among them some less frequent visitors: a few Tetsikutchin (Koyukon Athabaskans) who had come up with Whymper and Dall and a late-arriving group of twenty-five Tununkutchin (Tanana drainage Athabaskans) (McDonald 1865-1868:26-27 Jun 1867; Whymper 1868a:218-219).

On 29 June Dall and Whymper were joined by two other expedition members

just arrived from upriver. Frank Ketchum and Michael LeBarge had left Nulato by dogsled in mid March 1867, sat out spring breakup at Fort Yukon, and then set out by canoe to reconnoiter the upper reaches of the river as far as the abandoned Fort Selkirk. Together, the four explorers now had to wait for post manager McDougall to finish his trading with 200 to 250 of the gathered Natives before they could learn whether he had sufficient goods still in stock to pay their own Native guides and paddlers. McDougall grudgingly sold them two guns, a capote, three knives, and a powder horn for that purpose, and on 8 July was doubtless glad to see his visitors on their way. The American party reached Nulato on 13 July. There finding a letter summoning them immediately to Mikhailovskii, they packed up their scant moveable property and continued down to the coast (Dall 1870:116-117).

Spare as these descriptions of the 1866 and 1867 rendezvous are, they suggest two important factors that still limited the ability of either the Hudson's Bay Company or the Russian-American Company to monopolize the trade there. One factor was the identity of the trade's major participants. The spring rendezvous was still largely the domain of the Native middlemen, now accompanied by small delegations of company traders. The Hudson's Bay Company representatives came down with a group of Kutchin, primarily of the Yukon Flats band, who with their compatriots had sought to dominate the downriver fur trade since soon after the establishment of Fort Yukon. The Russian-American Company personnel came up with a large group of Koyukon, mostly from the lower Koyukuk and Nowitna Rivers, whose fellows had claimed the upriver trade as their own since at least 1842 by the historical record and likely for decades before.

Though surviving accounts only hint at the variety of activities that occurred at the annual rendezvous, common sense suggests that, given the ratio of company traders to Native middlemen, a preponderance of the social interactions and a fair number of the commercial transactions there did not involve the company traders at all. Moreover, those interactions were likely based on social ties and trade relations that had been developing for at least a generation before the company traders began to

participate in the rendezvous directly. Such ties were not readily extinguished by the mere fact that one group of traders had arrived earlier than another in several consecutive years.

The second important factor was the nature of the rendezvous itself. Its timing was imprecise, sometime between breakup and the Natives' dispersal to fish camps. Those who intended to participate tried to arrive as soon as possible after the rivers became passable, but many things could delay them on the way. Rather than being one mass gathering, the rendezvous was fluid in composition, with some groups arriving late and others departing early, depending on their own circumstances. There was thus an element of chance in whom the company traders found there when they arrived.

The company traders themselves were not equipped to wait out the arrival of all potential customers. With no permanent establishment at the rendezvous, they had only what trade goods they could bring with them and what food supplies they had brought or could barter or hunt on site. When they had bartered all their goods or ran out of food, they set out for home regardless of whether all the groups they expected had put in an appearance. Natives who came too late to meet the company men could either trade with whomever they found at the rendezvous or travel to one of the company posts. Given these uncertainties, the first company to arrive at the rendezvous did not necessarily claim the better part of the trade.

The End of an Era

As the telegraph expedition members hurriedly packed up their belongings at Nulato in mid July of 1867, the post was abuzz with a strange rumor: all of Russia's possessions in North America had been sold to "an American company," and two American vessels were already at Mikhailovskii redoubt. On reaching Mikhailovskii themselves, the explorers found at least part of the story to be true. The American vessel *Clara Belle* had arrived in port in late June, thirty days out of San Francisco. Among other news of the outside world, it brought word of the recent sale of Russian

America to the United States government for some seven million dollars. It also brought news that concerned the explorers directly. Rendered superfluous by the successful laying of the Atlantic cable in 1866, their expedition was officially terminated. That, at least, explained the party's mysterious orders to return to the coast so precipitously (Adams 1982:207; Dall 1870:117-119).

When the *Clara Belle* left for the Siberian coast in late August to rendezvous with personnel of the Siberian contingent of the telegraph expedition, one former expedition member stayed behind at Mikhailovskii. William Healey Dall, late of the scientific arm of the expedition, begged permission to remain in the region one more year to fill out the ethnographic, geological, and other data he had been collecting. Sergei S. Rusanov, still manager of Mikhailovskii redoubt and the Russian-American Company's northern district, gave his consent, but warned Dall that he would tolerate no fur trading on the side. The few letters he had received from Sitka on the summer transport dealt with routine matters only and mentioned neither sale of Russian territory nor relinquishment of the company's trade monopoly in the colonies. Until Rusanov received official notification of some change in the company's status, he intended to carry on as before (Dall 1870:122-123; RCS 49/91, 92, 94:fo. 43-50v, 8 and 10 May 1867).

In fact, there was nothing to hinder Rusanov in realizing this intention. The summer transport with his year's supplies and trade goods arrived as usual, dispatched from Sitka in mid May (O.S.), before the sale was ratified. The actual transfer of possession did not occur in Sitka until mid October (N.S.), too late in the year for the expected swarm of American traders to make their way so far north that season. It is conceivable that Mikhailovskii saw some increase in competition from the coastal whaler-traders in the autumn of 1867, though, lacking comparative data, it is impossible to tell whether the trade in guns and liquor reported by Dall that season significantly exceeded the norm of recent years (Dall 1870:134, 143, 161). In the interior of the northern district, however, the winter and spring trade of 1867-68 was clearly "business as usual."

Lacking Russian-American Company correspondence post-dating the end of May, 1867, we are dependent on Dall's observations for a description of the middle Yukon trade that winter. The young American explorer made his way back to Nulato by the first winter trail, arriving near the end of November (N.S.). As in the previous year, a small group of Natives from upriver came in to trade in mid December. Dall identified one as the Nowikakat toyon who, with seven other men, brought a small hand-sled load of furs that were sold to the Russians. In mid January of 1868, a little later than in the previous year, Nulato post manager Ivan Pavlov set out upriver toward Nowikakat to trade. For lack of dog feed, however, he had a poor trip and returned at the end of the month with only a black bear skin and a lynx skin to show for it. Meanwhile, the winter overland mail to Mikhailovskii via Nushagak had brought official notice of the sale of Russia's American possessions. Iakov Komarov, Ivan Lukin, and "Aloshka" arrived in Nulato with the news on 3 February, and Komarov and Lukin continued on to the Koyukuk River to trade. A bit more successful than the post manager had been, they returned with a few furs ten days later (Dall 1870:171-183).

Soon thereafter, Dall set out for Mikhailovskii, thus depriving us of further information on the late winter trade out of Nulato. His arrival on the coast does, however, give us a brief glimpse of that branch of the trade. He noted that the winter trade expeditions out of Mikhailovskii redoubt had been very successful, netting more furs than had been obtained "for many previous years" (Dall 1870:184). Given Dall's notorious looseness with statements of a historical nature, we may question the accuracy of this last assertion, but it appears that district manager Rusanov and his men were at very least pleased with the season's returns.

With word of the colonies' sale now out, district management personnel began to plan for an orderly closure of the region's posts. Since neither American traders nor the Russian-American Company's vessels would be arriving before the summer navigation season, they still intended to finish out the fiscal year. At the opening of river navigation, personnel from the various posts would make their usual spring

trading trips, then pack up their belongings and moveable company property and make their way down to the coast. From there boats from Mikhailovskii would transport them all to the redoubt to await the company vessel that would take them to the Amur River port of Nikolaevsk on the Asian shore (Dall 1870:192; Pierce 1973:28).

For personnel at the company's Nulato post, the plan entailed one more spring trip upriver to Nuklukayet. Dall, by then back from the coast, saw off the post manager and his crew on 1 June, a few days later than in the previous two seasons (Dall 1870:206). Unfortunately, we know nothing of the expedition's outcome, for the American explorer was soon on his way in the opposite direction, heading down to Mikhailovskii. We can only suppose that the Russians' last upriver trading trip was similar to others of recent years.

By the end of June, 1868, the first American vessels were already at Mikhailovskii. Among them, or arriving slightly later, was the former Russian-American Company steamer *Aleksandr II*, now the *Alexander* of Hutchinson, Kohl and Company, who, late in December of 1867, had purchased most of the Russian firm's assets in North America. That summer, company partner Hayward M. Hutchinson and former colonial chief manager Maksutov were making the rounds of the major Russian posts to settle accounts and pick up employees who wished to leave the country (Dall 1870:239-240; Pierce 1973:26, 28). A Russian-American Company vessel, the brig *Shelikhov*, arrived in mid July (early July N.S.) to transport any remaining employees to Sitka (ARCA 1868). The two vessels found fewer eager to depart than they might have expected. About half the forty Russian, creole, and other non-Native employees of the Mikhailovskii district elected to stay behind to work with or for the various American trading companies (ARCA 1867, 1871:fr. 148, 1876; Mercier 1986:12-15; ROCA 1876).[81]

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[81]Among the Russians who did leave was hieromonk Ilarion, the Russian Church's missionary for the region. Fearing that it would be impossible to keep the more remote missions supplied without the logistical support formerly provided by the Russian-American Company, the Consistory in Sitka had recalled the outlying missionaries. The

The one asset Hutchinson, Kohl and Company had been unable to purchase was the Russian-American Company's imperially granted monopoly over Alaska's resources and trade. Reorganized as the Alaska Commercial Company, it would within a few years absorb most of its competitors in the region, but until then some half dozen upstart companies vied to claim the Yukon drainage trade. The Pioneer Company, the first group of outside entrepreneurs to reach the middle Yukon after the transfer of ownership, included at least two former members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition: Michael LeBarge and James M. Bean. By August of 1868 it had begun building a small post on the Yukon at "Nuklukayet,"[82] fifteen to twenty miles downstream from the mouth of the Tanana, and wintered there. Though that group disbanded in 1869, other companies were already arriving to push even farther upriver.[83] The region's Native traders suddenly had a multiplicity of posts from which to choose (Mercier 1986:11 n. 14, 66; Webb 1985:55-56).

Quite understandably, the Hudson's Bay Company kept a wary eye on these unwelcome developments in the neighboring territory. In June of 1867, on hearing of the Russian colonies' sale, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company territories William McTavish immediately notified William Hardisty, head of the Mackenzie

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region's Russian church and chapels remained in caretaker status, maintained by dedicated laymen and church workers (particularly servitor Zakharii Bel'kov), until the mission was officially reestablished in 1876 (ARCA 1868, 1871).

[82]As pointed out by Turck and Turck (1992:51-52 and fig. 2), at various times in the period 1868 through the early 1900s there were trading posts called Nuklukayet in at least four different locations, all on the north bank of the Yukon downstream from the mouth of the Tanana. None corresponded to the place referred to as Nuklukayet in the writings of members of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, the place the local Natives called *Noo Chuh Gholoyet*, the point of land formed by the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers, east of the mouth of the Tanana (Jones 1986:45; Turck and Turck 1992:53).

[83]Many of the Pioneer Company's members remained active on the Yukon after 1869 as affiliates of other companies or, more rarely, as independents in loose partnership with some of the former Russian-American Company employees (including Ivan Lukin) who stayed in the region (Mercier 1986; Bean 1985).

River District at Fort Simpson. Worried that American competition would quickly force the company to withdraw from the Yukon, he advised Hardisty to begin looking for a new site for its westernmost post somewhere within British territory (HBC 1865-69:93).

Hardisty was more inclined to wait to see what would happen. While he admitted that the company would be hard pressed to compete even on the British portion of the Yukon should the Americans begin using steamers to carry trade goods upriver from the west, he was unwilling to pull out prematurely. He therefore heartily endorsed post manager James McDougall's proposal to continue, and expand, the downriver trade expeditions out of Fort Yukon (HBC 1862-67:fo. 121, 123v, 1867-70:28).

As it was with the Russians downriver, business at Fort Yukon in the 1867-68 season followed its usual routine. The post may even have put a little extra effort into its trade that year, for at the opening of navigation in the spring of 1868 McDougall himself made the trip down to the mouth of the Gens du Butte (Tanana) River for the annual rendezvous. He was somewhat disappointed in the results, but found no reason to blame the territory's recent change in ownership. Fur bearers had reportedly been scarce the previous winter, and it was McDougall's understanding that few of the "more distant Indians" had procured enough furs to make the long journey to the rendezvous worth their while. As a consequence, the post manager rated the success of his downriver trip as merely "fair" and found his overall returns for the fiscal year just ending to be slightly lower than those of the previous year (HBC 1865-69:158-159).

Not until late September of 1868 did a Native arrive from the Tanana River with the disheartening news McDougall had been expecting. His Russian rivals were gone, but the American traders had arrived in force. The visitor reported that four boats had ascended the Yukon with trade goods and winter provisions. Two had stayed at Nulato, one had gone as far as the Frog (Nowitna?) River, and at the end of August the fourth boatload of traders had reached the mouth of the Tanana River,

where they commenced building (HBC 1865-69:190; McDonald 1868-72:27 Sep 1868).[84]

This last bit of intelligence was particularly discouraging, for by McDougall's estimate Fort Yukon had been receiving some two-thirds of its annual returns, mostly in marten, from the Tanana drainage. The Hudson's Bay Company trader found some consolation in the knowledge that a relatively small Native population would be within easy reach of the new post over the winter. The post would thus be unlikely to take in a significant number of furs in its first months of operation. In the spring, however, the Americans would be in position to monopolize the annual trade rendezvous when all the more distant Natives brought in their winter's catch.

Determined not to lose the Yukon trade if he could help it, McDougall proposed to open a competing post at the mouth of the Tanana. He hoped to travel there on snowshoes at the beginning of April, 1869, with the Black River "chief" Red Leggings (Bikeinechatti) to choose a site, and planned to remain there to pick up any incidental trade until the Fort Yukon boat could come down at the end of May. The trader did go down sometime in the spring of 1869, absenting himself from Fort Yukon until about 12 June, but the records at hand do not indicate how much of his plan he was able to implement (HBC 1865-69:190, 233-235; McDonald 1868-72:18 Jun 1869). What the records do show is that McDougall had been unable to hold his post's accustomed share of the Yukon drainage trade. Fort Yukon's returns for the 1868-69 season were less than half what they had been the previous year (HBC 1865-69:190-191, 1867-68:41, 1868-69:fo. 17v).

The trader had no time to explore alternative measures for countering his downriver competitors, for events already in motion were soon to force him out of American territory altogether. By 1869 the United States government had already lodged complaints against Hudson's Bay Company trespass on the Yukon River (HBC

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[84]Whether the Pioneer Company was represented by all four boats or only the last mentioned is unknown.

1865-69:259). Company officials were reluctant to act because, until the post's longitude had been precisely determined, trespass could not be proved. Needless to say, such an argument could not forestall the Americans for long. By the end of the summer they had all the proof they needed to demand the immediate cessation of all Hudson's Bay Company trade out of Fort Yukon.

The task of gathering the necessary information was assigned to Captain Charles Raymond, United States Army, Corps of Engineers. His orders, dated April of 1869, directed him to determine the post's latitude and longitude, ascertain the volume of trade conducted there, and, as possible, collect data on the region's resources and Native populations.[85] Raymond reached Mikhailovskii at the end of June, and at the beginning of July set out up the Yukon aboard the small trading steamer *Yukon*, the first on the river. The party reached Fort Yukon at the end of the same month. Adverse weather conditions delayed Raymond's astronomical observations for a week, but on 9 August he was able to announce his findings. In the capacity of temporary representative of the United States Treasury Department, he notified McDougall's assistant, John Wilson, that the post was on United States territory, that importation of trade goods and the trade of foreigners with the Natives were illegal and must stop, and that the Hudson's Bay Company must withdraw as soon as practicable. He then took possession of Fort Yukon and raised the American flag. When the steamer departed the following day, it left Ferdinand Westdahl (former member of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition) and Moses Mercier behind to occupy the post for the American firm of Parrott and Company (Raymond 1900:21, 23).

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[85]Historian Morgan B. Sherwood seems to suggest that these orders were prompted by complaints arising out of a confrontation between American and Hudson's Bay Company traders at the Nuklukayet rendezvous in the spring of 1868 (Sherwood 1965:90-91; cf. Raymond 1900:20). Since the American presence near Nuklukayet dates no earlier than about August of 1868, it is more likely that the reported confrontation occurred when McDougall came down to trade in the spring of 1869. By then, Captain Raymond was already en route to the Yukon.

Assistant post manager Wilson immediately sent word of these developments to district manager Hardisty at Fort Simpson. Hardisty responded with two letters. The first, addressed to McDougall, contained instructions for abandoning Fort Yukon. The second, addressed to F. M. Smith, superintendent of Parrott and Company, discussed sale of the post's buildings and goods to the American firm. Perhaps fearing that the Americans would seek damages, Hardisty also took this opportunity to assure Smith that the Hudson's Bay Company's trespass had not only been quite unintentional, but had occurred at the express invitation of the local Natives (HBC 1867-70:13 Oct 1869).

As ordered, McDougall and his men spent the winter building a new post some distance up the Porcupine River at the lower end of the "Upper Ramparts," a site they mistakenly believed to be safely within British territory. Out of respect for the lateness of the season, the Americans occupying Fort Yukon permitted the former owners to leave most of their moveable property there until the opening of navigation the following spring, but did not allow them to engage in their customary trade with any of the visiting Natives. The Hudson's Bay Company's business ties to Fort Yukon thus severed, it had only to remove the last of its goods to complete its formal withdrawal from the station. This was accomplished with the departure of the last well-laden company boat at the end of May, 1870 (McDonald 1868-72:29 Nov 1869-30 May 1870).

The Hudson's Bay Company, still a viable firm, did not cut its ties with the middle Yukon as cleanly as had the Russian-American Company. From its Porcupine River post, transferred to the upper end of the Upper Ramparts in 1872, it continued to draw the trade of some of its former Native customers for another two decades. Never again, however, would it regain its prominence in the region (Coates 1980:127-175). Indeed, the arrival of the American trading companies in 1868 and 1869 marked the beginning of a new era in the middle Yukon fur trade, an era with a distinctive character of its own.

CHAPTER 7
DYNAMICS OF THE MIDDLE YUKON TRADE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One of the striking features of the early history of the Yukon drainage fur trade is the pivotal role of the Native traders in determining its spatial patterning. While from one perspective the trade could be characterized as a three-way competition between the Russian-American Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the intercontinental/whaling trade of the shores of Bering Strait, the direct representatives of those interests rarely, if ever, crossed paths. Instead, the competition was played out through the various Native middlemen who channeled furs into the trade.

Representatives of the firms trading in the Yukon drainage often perceived the Natives as maddeningly independent, for proximity to a trading site and interactions among the various Native societies were generally more important determinants of who traded where than were specific inducements offered by one firm over another. This is not to say, however, that regional trade patterns remained static. The narrative of Chapters 2 through 6 reveals that, though regional patterns were characterized by a certain overall stability in the period 1830 through 1868, they also underwent marked change. The present chapter reviews those changes with regard to the trade of the middle Yukon drainage and discusses the influence of material and social factors upon the spatial patterns of that trade.

Changing Spatial Patterns of the Middle Yukon Trade

The fur trade was already well established in the Yukon drainage in 1830, when the Russian-American Company began annual voyages to Norton Sound and Bering Strait. The "Kvikhpaktsy," Yup'ik traders of the lower Yukon, obtained furs through barter from the lower Chagliuk (Innoko) River and the Anvik area at a major trade fair at Anilukhtakpak (near present-day Holy Cross) and traded them in turn at

the coastal settlement of Pastolik. Part of the furs from the Anvik area also reached the coast at Kikhtaguk (Klikitarik). Middlemen from the mouth of the Koyukuk River, who obtained furs from an undetermined distance up the Yukon, annually met the "Ulukagmiut" (Lower Yukon Koyukon of Kaltag-Unalakleet portage) at a trade fair in the vicinity of Nulato. The Ulukagmiut, in turn, bartered those furs at the coastal settlement of Unalakleet. Furs from the Yukon for some distance below Nulato, collected by the "Takaiaksa" (Lower Yukon Koyukon of Kaiyuh area), also reached Unalakleet via the Ulukagmiut traders.

Pastolik, Kikhtaguk, Unalakleet, and other coastal settlements and rendezvous were visited each summer by the "Aziiagmiut" or "Maleimiut," Iñupiaq traders of the Bering Strait area, who bought up the furs in exchange for both native products and European goods such as tobacco and metalware, and bartered them in turn to the Chukchi and Yup'ik of the Siberian coast. Through the Chukotkans, Yukon drainage furs came into the hands of the Russian traders in Siberia, and ultimately reached Chinese and European markets.

At the same time, furs from the eastern part of the Yukon drainage were reaching the markets of Europe through the Hudson's Bay Company and perhaps China by way of American trading vessels and the Russian-American Company. By 1830, furs provided by the Upper Porcupine and Crow Flats Kutchin were already an important part of the trade at the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie River (Krech 1976:217-218). Whether those Kutchin hunted the furs themselves or were, as in later years, trading them from groups still farther west is not known. At an equally early date, the Chilkat Tlingit and their network of Athabaskan middlemen may already have been supplying American, British, and Russian traders of the Northwest Coast with furs from the upper Yukon, but the downriver extent of that trade network is also unknown.

Thus, even before establishment of the first permanent European post in the region, the fur trade of the Yukon drainage was divided into a western sphere and an eastern sphere. That division persisted through 1868, but where the divide fell, the

"watershed" in the flow of furs, shifted downriver over time, consonant with the shifting fortunes of the various Native groups who acted as middlemen in the trade. Around 1830, the divide lay on the middle Yukon somewhere between the Koyukon traders of the mouth of the Koyukuk River and the Upper Porcupine Kutchin.

The Russian-American Company's penetration of the lower Yukon drainage in the period 1833 through 1840 disrupted preexisting trade patterns to some extent. With establishment of an odinochka on the Kuskokwim River in 1833 and of Ikogmiut odinochka on the Yukon late in 1835, the company began to siphon off part of the furs that would otherwise have gone to Pastolik. The coastal Mikhailovskii redoubt, too, tried to interfere with the Pastolik trade. It periodically threatened to block passage to any Aziiagmiut who would not sell to the redoubt the furs they had bartered at the Pastolik rendezvous. These proved but minor inconveniences to the Native traders, however. Even after the devastation of the 1838 smallpox epidemic, Pastolik remained an important link in the intercontinental trade.

More disruptive was the establishment of a Russian fishing station/way station at Unalakleet sometime between 1834 and 1839. By 1842 at latest, it appears that Shaktoolik had supplanted Unalakleet as a major trading stop for the Aziiagmiut as they made their rounds of coastal settlements each summer. Concomitant with this, the major Native trade route from the middle Yukon to the coast apparently diverged north from the Unalakleet portage at the village of Kuikhkhogliuk, located on a stream of the same name (likely the Chiroskey River), just above its juncture with the Unalakleet River (Zagoskin 1967:135, 137; cf. Wright 1995:28).

Establishment of a Russian post at Nulato in 1839 also affected the flow of furs from the middle Yukon to the coast. The Russians had chosen that site precisely because it was already a major rendezvous point in the Native trade network. Initially, the post attracted the local middlemen, the lower Koyukuk Koyukon and the Takaiaksa. They sold the Russians a portion of the furs they bartered up- and downstream, respectively, furs that would otherwise have gone to the Ulukagmiut for transport to the coast. By 1841-42, however, even some of those who supplied furs to

the local middlemen had begun to trade directly with the post.

Among the middlemen, particularly the Ulukagmiut and Takaiaksa, this generated considerable resentment against the Russians and gave rise to various plots to harm the interlopers and their trade. It may also have precipitated the Takaiaksa massacre in 1842 of the people of Vazhichagat, an Ingalik settlement near the mouth of Shageluk Slough, many of whom traded with Nulato. Moreover, in 1843 the Ulukagmiut and Takaiaksa shifted their usual summer rendezvous with the lower Koyukuk Koyukon traders upstream, to the mouth of the Koyukuk River. Though on their return trip downriver they still bartered to the Nulato post part of the furs obtained, the move asserted the separateness of their trade from that of the Russians.

The lower Koyukuk Koyukon, too, were subject to Russian competition out of Nulato. By 1843, if not earlier, lower Koyukuk traders were obtaining furs from as far upriver as the Kutchin of the Yukon Flats, both through intervening Yukon River Koyukon groups and through people of the lower reaches of the Tanana River, who may also have been Koyukon. These were the skins they bartered to the Ulukagmiut and Takaiaksa each summer. Not satisfied with the share they could persuade the middlemen to sell, company personnel at Nulato did their best to encourage the upriver Natives to bypass the lower Koyukuk Koyukon and bring their furs directly to the Russian post. That proving ineffective, however, the company decided to take more aggressive action. Beginning in 1846, the Nulato post had standing orders to dispatch a party upriver at the opening of navigation each spring in an attempt to reach the various trade rendezvous before the lower Koyukuk Koyukon did.

By 1842, the Russians had become aware that the Koyukuk River Koyukon were middlemen in another trade network as well, one that funneled furs from the Koyukuk River drainage to Kotzebue Sound by way of the Buckland River. That trade, however, proved much less susceptible to Russian interference. The route itself lay entirely outside the area frequented by Russian traders, and its distance from Nulato made it impractical to divert the few available post personnel in that direction. The company considered establishing a post on Kotzebue Sound, the furs' destination,

but rejected the idea because of its inability to assure the post's supply. The route overland from Nulato was too long, and ice conditions in Kotzebue Sound made annual supply by sea uncertain. Sea ice conditions also precluded the company from undertaking an annual trading voyage to Kotzebue Sound in lieu of establishing a post there. This relative immunity of the Koyukon's northern route to Russian interference was to have important implications for the western Yukon drainage trade in later years.

The trade of the eastern part of the Yukon drainage also underwent significant changes in the early 1840s. In 1840 the Hudson's Bay Company established a post on the Peel River. Though the site of the new post was still east of the continental divide, its proximity to Upper Porcupine and Crow Flats Kutchin territory gave those groups readier access to European trade goods than before. The prior extent of their activity as middlemen in the fur trade is unknown. Now, however, they became very active in that role, bartering many of their furs from Kutchin groups living farther to the west.

By mid decade at latest, some of those same western Kutchin groups were being visited by Han middlemen as well, participants in the trade network dominated by the Chilkat Tlingit of the Southeast Alaskan coast. While competition in the coastal trade had decreased in intensity in the period 1835-1845, both the trade and Chilkat participation in it had become more regular in nature. Following expiration of American trading privileges in Southeast Alaskan waters in 1834, the Russian-American Company instituted annual voyages to Lynn Canal to purchase furs from the Chilkat (Arndt, Sackett, and Ketz 1987:189). These ceased in 1840, when the Russians leased the mainland coast from Portland Canal to Cape Spencer to the Hudson's Bay Company, but the latter firm maintained contacts with the Chilkat out of its short-lived Fort Durham (1840-43), located at Taku Harbor, and through its own annual trading voyages to Lynn Canal (Bowsfield 1979:156, 161; Olson 1994). Encouraged by such developments, the Chilkat trade network into the interior continued to expand, drawing in the Han and, through them, the western Kutchin.

Though the developments of 1833 to 1845 affected Native trade networks in both the eastern and western spheres of the Yukon drainage fur trade, they may have had little effect upon where the divide between them fell. The greater availability of data for this period does, however, allow clearer definition of the divide. By about 1840 to 1845 it apparently lay in the middle of the Yukon Flats, in the territory of the Yukon Flats and Birch Creek Kutchin. The people of this region provided furs both to the Han and Kutchin middlemen who visited them from the south and east, and, directly or indirectly, to lower Koyukuk Koyukon middlemen who came from the west.

The Hudson's Bay Company's establishment of a Yukon River post profoundly altered these trade patterns within a very few years. Built in 1847 on the Yukon just above its confluence with the Porcupine River, Fort Yukon was located well within the territory of the Yukon Flats Kutchin. Within three years of the post's opening, the role the Yukon Flats Kutchin and their immediate neighbors played in the trade had been transformed. Previously providers of furs to middlemen in three different trade networks, they themselves became important middlemen in the trade with Europeans.

The transformation occurred by stages. First to lose their trade to Fort Yukon were the Upper Porcupine and Crow Flats Kutchin middlemen, whose trading partners found that the local post offered the same sorts of goods in greater variety and at lower prices. The former middlemen, cut off from their chief source of furs, had only the fruits of their own hunts to trade for Hudson's Bay Company goods. Lacking large populations of the most desired fur bearers in their own territory, they became known primarily as purveyors of meat, hides, and muskrat skins, items that commanded relatively low prices.

The Han middlemen, too, were quickly cut out of most of the trade in furs with the Kutchin groups of the Yukon Flats. They did, however, apparently retain their role as middlemen by providing their neighbors to the south with goods from Fort Yukon in exchange for dentalium shells and other items from the coastal trade

that still sold well on the Yukon. This may have been particularly true after Chilkat middlemen destroyed the short-lived Fort Selkirk (1848-1852), the Hudson's Bay Company post most likely to offer the Han competition in trade with their southern neighbors.

The relationship of the Kutchin groups of the Yukon Flats to the western trade network changed more slowly. In large part this was because, at first, Fort Yukon could not fully satisfy local demand for beads and guns, the most desired of its trade goods. Disappointed Kutchin continued to take a portion of their furs to their accustomed trade rendezvous to the west, where beads were more readily available. By 1849, however, the Hudson's Bay Company post was better supplied, and when some of the local Kutchin next traveled southwest to meet the "Gens de Butes" (people of the Tanana River drainage), it was with the intention of purchasing furs rather than selling them. Though the Kutchin failed in this initial attempt at redirecting the trade, similar efforts in the fall of 1850 and the winter of 1850-51 were a success. At the same time, people from the western trade network began themselves to come to the Kutchin and to Fort Yukon to sell furs, particularly the "Gens de Butes."

The sparse information available suggests that prior to 1850 the "Gens de Butes" fell firmly within the western sphere of the Yukon drainage trade, channeling furs from both the Kutchin and the peoples of the Tanana River drainage to the lower Koyukuk Koyukon and Russians. Now, however, they bartered Tanana drainage furs both to their previous customers and to the Kutchin. Thus, by 1850, the divide between the eastern and western spheres of the trade had shifted from the Yukon Flats to the lower reaches of the region drained by the Tanana. With minor fluctuations, it would remain there through 1868.

In the decade following 1850, both the lower Koyukuk Koyukon and the Kutchin strengthened their holds on the trade of the middle Yukon. To a large extent, local representatives of the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies found themselves on the sidelines as the two contingents of Native middlemen vied to capture the greater share of the trade.

Surviving Russian-American Company records suggest that by 1847 the Koyukon of the lower Koyukuk River had already assumed greater control of the middle Yukon trade at the expense of the Russians and the Takaiaksa and Ulukagmiut middlemen. When Nulato post manager Deriabin tried to trace the Koyukon route to Kotzebue Sound that November, the track he followed took him instead to within three days of Shaktoolik, the settlement and trade rendezvous located on Norton Sound. The lower Koyukuk Koyukon had apparently opened a more direct route to Shaktoolik that cut out the Ulukagmiut in favor of other, "Maleimiut" (Iñupiaq), middlemen. And, if the Koyukon's furs were no longer transported to Shaktoolik by way of the Unaiakleet portage, the Russians could no longer hope to barter a portion of those furs as they passed Nulato.

The lower Koyukuk Koyukon tightened their hold on the middle Yukon trade in 1851. In February of that year they attacked both the Nulato post and the Native village neighboring it. According to local oral tradition, their destruction of the Native village and the many Ulukagmiut visiting it at the time was but the latest episode in a long-standing power struggle between rival shamans (Wright 1995), perhaps exacerbated by trade jealousies, while the Russian post may have suffered as protector of the Native village. Whatever the reason behind it, the attack on Nulato village and its Ulukagmiut visitors eliminated a competitor in the trade. Moreover, the Russian-American Company's reaction to the attack on the Nulato post effectively removed its agents from direct participation in the upriver trade for the next decade.

Ironically, success of the lower Koyukuk Koyukon in gaining control of the western end of the middle Yukon trade network did not translate into expansion of their influence upriver. Quite the contrary, in the early 1850s the trade ties of Fort Yukon and the Kutchin spread downriver at their expense. With the Russians no longer traveling upriver to the spring rendezvous, the volume of non-Native trade goods available there declined, and disappointed groups of would-be buyers turned instead to the Kutchin and Hudson's Bay Company for such goods.

In the period 1851 through 1853, the Hudson's Bay Company manager at Fort

Yukon recorded with satisfaction each defection from the western sphere of the trade: greater volumes of "Gens de Butes" furs brought in by the Kutchin, first-time visits to Fort Yukon by small groups of "Gens de Butes" themselves, Kutchin initiation of contacts with representatives of "distant" downriver peoples who promised to come to the fort with their fellows and fur catches. By 1853, even some of the Yukon River Koyukon had begun to look to the Kutchin and Fort Yukon for beads, tobacco, and particularly firearms, an item not available elsewhere in the region.

There were limitations on the extent to which the Kutchin and Fort Yukon could monopolize the middle Yukon trade. Practical considerations such as weather and trail conditions in any given trading season could hinder travel both for outbound Kutchin traders and for distant groups inbound with their furs, and winter and spring food scarcity sometimes necessitated a mobility among the Natives that rendered it difficult for buyers and sellers to make contact with each other. Logistical problems aside, Kutchin treatment of the distant groups with whom they traded may have been equally limiting. In the mid 1850s, Fort Yukon's manager complained repeatedly that the Kutchin "cheated" distant groups by underpaying them for their furs or pillaging the furs outright, and expressed concern that this practice would discourage fur production. Moreover, he claimed that delegations of the more distant groups were deterred from visiting his post to trade in person because local Kutchin, in an attempt to preserve their own middleman status, intercepted the visitors and forced them to surrender their furs at less than the post tariff.

The threat that low prices posed to the Kutchin's, and Fort Yukon's, expanded share of the middle Yukon trade was not that they would dampen fur production among the distant peoples, but that they left the trade vulnerable to any resurgence in competition from downriver. Just such a resurgence occurred with the intensification of trade by foreign whalers along the shores of Bering Strait and Kotzebue Sound in the mid to late 1850s. The lower Koyukuk Koyukon, through their continued ties with the coastal trade, quickly gained access to the whalers' goods, which soon included firearms, and served as a conduit through which those goods could reach the

middle Yukon.

Interaction between old Native trade networks and the new coastal trade greatly affected the fortunes of Fort Yukon and the region's Russian-American Company posts in the period 1856-1860. As the coastal trade intensified, it drew a greater share of the middle Yukon furs westward, away from the Hudson's Bay Company post and the Kutchin middlemen, and Fort Yukon suffered a temporary decline in fur returns. Meanwhile, the Russian-American Company, its posts still relatively well situated with relation to Native trade routes, enjoyed a slight increase in returns for the Yukon region as a whole as it intercepted a portion of the westbound furs. By 1859-60, however, the Russian posts, too, saw lower returns as the various groups of Native middlemen sought to assert greater control over the trade. Not coincidentally, in the period 1859-1862 the number of specific reports of Russian difficulties with Maleimiut (Iñupiaq) middlemen on the coast and lower Yukon was higher than at any time since the late 1830s and early 1840s.

This shift in trade patterns elicited remarkably similar responses from the firms resident in the region. The Russian-American Company blamed its lost trade upon competition from the Hudson's Bay Company and the whalers and upon Native middlemen who bypassed Russian posts, while Hudson's Bay Company personnel blamed competition from the Russians and the behavior of Native middlemen who, by their treatment of other Natives, drove them to trade with the Russians. The solutions the firms proposed were identical: to initiate company trading expeditions to the major Native trade rendezvous near the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers, thereby opening direct trade relations at the fur "divide" and cutting out the Native middlemen. For the Russians, this would revive a practice discontinued in 1851. For the Hudson's Bay Company, it would be an innovation.

Even as the firms prepared to implement these proposals, it became clear that recent gains by the western sphere of trade at the expense of the eastern sphere were less than permanent. By 1860 Fort Yukon, both through direct dealings with visitors from downriver and through the Kutchin middlemen, had begun to regain its former

share of the region's trade, and by 1862 it was reportedly receiving furs from as far downriver as the upper Chagliuk (middle Innoko). One suspects that in variety, volume, and constancy of supply, the goods reaching the middle Yukon from the whaling trade had proven inadequate to replace those available from Fort Yukon, but specific data on this topic are lacking. In any event, a turnabout that was comforting to the Hudson's Bay Company was not so to the Russians, who proceeded with their plan to resume direct trade at the upriver rendezvous. And when Fort Yukon's manager saw a direct connection between a year of disappointing returns and the Russians' first trip to the rendezvous, he believed he had no choice but to follow their example.

As a strategy to cut coastal whalers and Native middlemen out of the Yukon fur trade, Russian renewal of expeditions to the upriver rendezvous was a failure. The large contingent of lower Koyukuk and Yukon River Koyukon who accompanied the Russian boat to the rendezvous continued as before to trade on their own account and funnel middle Yukon furs to the coast. That is not to say, however, that the Russia-American Company derived no benefit from the expeditions. As direct participants in trade at the rendezvous, company personnel were able to obtain a greater share of the furs than when they had been dependent upon what Koyukon middlemen or other visiting Natives were willing to barter to the Nulato post.

One of Fort Yukon's original objectives in dispatching its own boat to the rendezvous was to eliminate the middleman role of the local Kutchin. By the time the plan was implemented, however, the Kutchin must already have been finding that role much less lucrative. The Russians, both at their Nulato post and at the rendezvous, were offering essentially the same prices for furs as did Fort Yukon. Though the Kutchin could still offer some goods that the Russians did not, Russian prices at the rendezvous largely undermined the middlemen's ability to reap profits by purchasing furs cheaply and reselling them to Fort Yukon at that post's official prices. In such a case, Fort Yukon had no need to dispatch a separate company expedition to the rendezvous to assure that the Natives gathered there received the post's full prices for

their furs, and the Kutchin middlemen had no more reason to protest the participation of a post representative in their own annual rendezvous trip. This may have been the basis for the new spirit of cooperation that seems to have prevailed between the Kutchin traders and post manager after 1865.

Fort Yukon's other objective in sending a boat to the rendezvous was to compete more effectively with the Russians who traded there. Since the two firms were offering much the same fur prices, the Hudson's Bay Company post counted both upon Native preference for certain of its goods and upon an early arrival at the rendezvous to secure it a trade advantage. For lack of comparative data, it is uncertain whether this strategy actually increased Fort Yukon's share of the middle Yukon trade, but it was the post's surest means of retaining the share it already received.

Practically speaking, initiation of company expeditions to the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers in the mid 1860s had little effect upon the east-west division of the trade. While neither company could afford to discontinue its expeditions unilaterally, neither could one of them monopolize the middle Yukon trade at the expense of the other. The same logistical factors that had limited Kutchin domination of the trade in the 1850s were still applicable a decade later. Weather and river conditions affected the arrival times of the various groups of buyers and sellers at the rendezvous, and food supply affected the duration of their stays. Neither company had the resources to wait out the arrival of all possible fur-sellers at the rendezvous; each, as before, could only hope to attract those it had missed to its permanent station for trade. In the final analysis, neither company had introduced anything revolutionary in terms of river transport and supply. The chief modes of transportation both for supplying the inland posts and for travel from those posts to the rendezvous remained small, man-powered watercraft in the summer and sledges in the winter, essentially the same modes employed by the Native traders (cf. Bennett 1978:11, 22).

The rendezvous at the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers continued to mark the divide between the eastern and western spheres of the Yukon drainage trade through the first year of American operations in the region. When American traders

reached the middle Yukon in the summer of 1868, they established a post in the vicinity of this rendezvous with the intention of maintaining a year-round presence there. Their action likely altered trade patterns within the western network, diverting directly into American hands some portion of the furs that would otherwise have reached the coast through the Koyukon and other Native middlemen. It also appears to have increased the portion of furs garnered by the western trade network at the expense of the eastern one, for Fort Yukon's returns of 1868-69 registered a sharp decline. The Hudson's Bay Company and its Kutchin associates, however, still regarded the rendezvous as within the eastern sphere of the trade and continued to act accordingly.

This configuration of the trade changed drastically late in the summer of 1869 when, in compliance with a notice of trespass from the United States government, Hudson's Bay Company personnel ceased operations at Fort Yukon and withdrew upriver. The immediate effect was to open the door to American traders, who quickly occupied the post, and thus suddenly to shift the trade divide upriver to the vicinity of Fort Yukon. This alone did not assure American success in claiming all of the middle Yukon for the western sphere of the trade. Indeed, local Kutchin maintained their trade ties with the Hudson's Bay Company through its posts to the east. What allowed the American traders to consolidate their hold was the concurrent introduction of a mode of transport new to the region, a steam-powered river vessel. The steamer and the barges it towed could deliver a greater volume of goods greater distances upriver from the coast than previously practical, supplying the posts and fostering expansion of the western sphere of the trade still farther up the Yukon drainage (Bennett 1978:17). The subsequent fur-trade history of the region was dominated by competition among the various parties active in the westward-oriented trade. By the 1870s, the old east-west division was no longer a significant factor in the structure of trade relations on the middle Yukon.

APPENDIX 1
NATIVE SOCIO-TERRITORIAL GROUPS MENTIONED IN TEXT

ATHABASKAN PEOPLES

KOYUKON

Takaiaksa (*Kkaayeh hut'aane*), Koyukon inhabitants of the Kaiyuh area. Their territory lay between the Kaiyuh Mountains and the Yukon, stretching along the Yukon from the vicinity of present-day Blackburn Island up nearly to Nulato (Wright 1995:25-26). In Lieutenant Lavrentii Zagoskin's terminology, the Takaiaksa are one of the groups constituting the "Inkilik proper" (Zagoskin 1967:243). In Clark's classification of Koyukon groups, they are included in the Lower Yukon division. Linguistically, they are grouped with speakers of the Lower Koyukon dialect (Clark 1981:582; VanStone and Goddard 1981:559-560).

Ulukagmiut (*Denaa hut'aane*), Koyukon inhabitants of the Kaltag-Unalakleet portage (Wright 1995:26-29). In Lieutenant Lavrentii Zagoskin's terminology, the Ulukagmiut are one of the groups constituting the "Inkilik proper" (Zagoskin 1967:243). In Clark's classification of Koyukon groups, they are included in the Lower Yukon division. Linguistically, they are grouped with speakers of the Lower Koyukon dialect (Clark 1981:582; VanStone and Goddard 1981:559-560).

Kuiukantsy (plural). The Russian name for Koyukon-speaking inhabitants of the lower Koyukuk River drainage and of the Yukon's other tributaries from just above Nulato to just below the mouth of the Nowitna. In 1865 the Russian Orthodox missionary hieromonk Ilarion noted a linguistic boundary on the

Yukon between the Kuiukantsy and the Kol'chane.[86] By his estimate, the last Kuiukan settlement, Nokhotokoitok, lay just thirty versts (ca. twenty miles) downriver of the first Kol'chane settlement, Novykakat (at the mouth of the Nowitna River). He further stated that Kol'chane lived up the Yukon at least as far as Mentog settlement (vicinity of present-day Stevens Village), the home of the most distant of his personal contacts, and for an unknown distance up the Yukon beyond that (ARCA 1865b:fr. 400). The term Kuiukan apparently referred to speakers of the Central Koyukon dialect, while the Kol'chane with whom Ilarion had contact on the Yukon likely spoke the Upper Koyukon dialect (VanStone and Goddard 1981:559-560).

Teytseh-Kootchin, Taitsa Koochin, Tetsikutchin, 'men of the shade.' These terms were used at Fort Yukon to refer to a non-Kutchin-speaking Athabaskan people who lived somewhere downstream of the fort (cf. Osgood 1934:170 fig. 1, 172). They were most likely Koyukon. Hardisty's sketch map of 1853 (HBC 1853:fo. 77; reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57) places them on the Yukon and its tributaries between the mouths of the Tanana and Koyukuk Rivers. In 1870, however, Reverend Robert McDonald reported meeting with a Tetsikutchin camp some three and one-half days' travel below Fort Yukon but still one and one-half to two days' travel above the American trading post Nuklukayet (McDonald 1868-72:31 May-7 Jun 1870). Though McDonald (1868-72:18 Jun 1870) noted that the Natives as far downriver as the mouth of the Anvik spoke "a dialect of the tongue spoken by the

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[86]Not to be confused with the name ethnographers have adopted to refer specifically to the people of the upper Kuskokwim River. Hieromonk Ilarion applied the name "Kol'chane," which he also spelled "Kal'chane," not only to the people of the upper Kuskokwim, but to the peoples of the upper Chagliuk (Innoko) and the upper Kvikhpak (Yukon). He seems to have used the name in the general meaning of the Athabaskan term from which it is derived: people living inland from the speaker (VanStone and Goddard 1981:558).

Tetsikutchin," the Tetsikutchin name he reported for the mouth of Hess Creek, Yookootilchakat (*Yeggutlno'*, Hess Creek, plus *-kaakk'et*, mouth of), is Koyukon (McDonald 1868-72:22 Aug 1870; Jette n.d.:fr. 88; Jones 1986:48).

Keetla Koochin, Kitlikutchin. This term was used at Fort Yukon to refer to a non-Kutchin-speaking Athabaskan people who lived northwest of the fort, adjacent to the territory of the "Siffleux" (Dihai Kutchin; see below). They apparently lived somewhere on the upper Koyukuk River (cf. HBC 1853:fo. 77; reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57). In 1867 their population was reported to be approximately 180: 40 men, 40 women, and 100 children (McDonald 1865-68:12 Mar 1867).

KUTCHIN

Birch Creek Kutchin (*Deenduu Gwich'in*), the inhabitants of Birch Creek and the mountains to the southwest of it (Osgood 1934:172; Slobodin 1981:515). See also Kootcha-Kootchin.

Yukon Flats Kutchin (*Gwichyaa Gwich'in*), the inhabitants of the Yukon Flats from a few miles up the Yukon from Circle, or even as far upriver as the mouth of Sam Creek, down to the mouth of the Chandalar River (Osgood 1934:171; Slobodin 1981:515). See also Kootcha-Kootchin.

Kootcha-Kootchin, Koochakoochin, Kutcha-Kutchin. In the Hudson's Bay Company archival material dealing with Fort Yukon, this term does not always refer specifically to the group known to anthropologists as the Yukon Flats Kutchin (*Gwichyaa Gwich'in*) if that group's territory was indeed as depicted on the standard ethnographic maps of the region (e.g., Osgood 1934:170, 1936:14; Slobodin 1981:516). In his initial contacts with the area's Natives, Alexander Murray (1910:82) noted that the Kootcha-Koochin, the Natives in closest

proximity to the fort, were divided into three bands: upper (up the Porcupine River from the fort), middle (down the Yukon River from the fort), and lower (apparently those southeast of the fort, up the Yukon River). Subsequently, he made it explicit that the term "upper band," which seems to have dropped out of use after 1849, applied to "the Indians from Black River" (HBC 1849-50a:fo. 1).[87] In later years, the term "Kootcha-Kootchin" was still occasionally used to refer both to the "lower band" and to the "middle band" or "lower Indians (middle band)." In addition, the documents frequently refer to Native people from very near Fort Yukon as "lower Indians" or "Indians from below" with no clear indication as to which of these bands they represented (I exclude here contexts in which these same terms clearly refer to peoples far down the Yukon from the fort). Consequently, when the referent is ambiguous, I have used the gloss "Yukon Flats/Birch Creek Kutchin," reserving the more specific terms "Yukon Flats Kutchin" and "Birch Creek Kutchin" as glosses for "lower band" and "middle band," respectively.

Because of a certain vagueness in the archival data, however, my use of the term "Birch Creek Kutchin" might best be understood as indicating a Kutchin band whose territory included at least part of the Birch Creek drainage rather than as strictly equivalent to the Birch Creek Kutchin of the anthropological literature. If the "middle band" of archival records truly identified themselves as Yukon Flats Kutchin (*Gwichyaa Gwich'in*), one might argue that standard map depictions of Yukon Flats Kutchin band territory should be altered to include at least that section of Birch Creek known as the Upper Mouth and perhaps extend up Birch Creek as far as the parallel of present-day Circle, while depictions of Birch Creek Kutchin territory should include, in addition to the hills to the southwest of Birch Creek, only the creek's Lower

[87]For further discussion of the boundary between the territories of the Yukon Flats and Black River Kutchin, see the entry for Black River Kutchin.

Mouth, and should then extend down the Yukon to Dall River, the lower end of the Yukon Flats. Such an interpretation would be in closer accord with Hardisty's map of 1853 (HBC 1853:fo. 77; reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57). That map appears to include Birch Creek in the territory of the "Koocha Koochin" and assigns the entire lower end of the Yukon Flats, between the mouth of Birch Creek and the hills marking the lower terminus of the flats, to the "Indĭŭth or Gens de Brie" (the former is strikingly similar to "*de·ndĭu·*," the name reported by Osgood to refer to the Birch Creek people [Osgood 1934:172; cf. Slobodin 1981:532]). Under this interpretation, both the "lower band" and the "middle band" of the archival record would refer to anthropologists' Yukon Flats Kutchin, while the "Gens de Millieu" (see below), a distinct group of very small population whose territory was downriver of the mouth of Birch Creek, would represent anthropologists' Birch Creek Kutchin.

The question facing anthropologists is: Did the *Gwichyaa Gwich'in* consist of three local bands ("upper," on the lower Porcupine and lower Black Rivers; "middle," on the Yukon below Fort Yukon and in part of the Birch Creek drainage; and "lower," from Fort Yukon up the Yukon River to the head of the Yukon Flats) who made up a regional band?[88] If so, we must revise anthropological depictions of the Yukon Flats Kutchin territorial boundary in the Birch Creek area, as has already been done with regard to the lower reaches of the Black River (Slobodin 1981:516 fig. 1) and the lower Chandalar River (West 1959; McKennan 1965:16). The archival (written) record is insufficient to resolve this question, and direct ethnographic study is no longer feasible–even in 1932, when Osgood conducted his landmark ethnographic research in the region, the Birch Creek Kutchin were considered to be "long

[88]See McKennan (1969, especially pp. 104-105) for a discussion of the concept of local and regional bands with reference to the peoples of central Alaska.

extinct" and the Yukon Flats Kutchin were thought to be represented by only one family (Osgood 1934:171-172, 1936:14-15). As documented by Schneider (1976:198-199, 203-210), Mishler (1982), Jones (1986:55), and Burch and Mishler (1995), however, the region's Native peoples still preserve oral traditions containing historical and genealogical information which, if examined in conjunction with the written record, might yet yield fresh insights. This problem merits further study.

Black River Kutchin (*Draanjik Gwich'in*). It is not clear whether the territory of the Black River Kutchin included the entire Black River drainage (as implied by the band territorial boundaries depicted on the maps in Osgood [1934:170, 1936:14]) or was limited to the portion of the Black River drainage above the territory of the Yukon Flats Kutchin, who occupied its lower reaches (as implied by the band territorial boundaries depicted on the map in Slobodin [1981:516]). Alexander Murray initially used the term "upper band [of Kootcha-Kootchin]" to designate at least some of the inhabitants of the Black River (HBC 1849-50a:fo. 1), but we do not know where he thought their territorial bounds to be. After 1849, it appears that Hudson's Bay Company records referred to inhabitants of *all* parts of the Black River drainage as "Black River Indians," and the term "upper band" fell out of use. The notion that the territory of the "Kootcha-Kootchin" included some part of the Black River is also found in Kennicott (Chicago Academy of Sciences 1867-69:176) and Whymper (1869:177). On the other hand, Reverend Robert McDonald, resident in the region much longer than visitors Kennicott and Whymper, seems to have referred to all inhabitants of the Black River drainage as Black River Indians or "Tranjik-Kutchin" (*Draanjik Gwich'in*). Most significantly, he used this term in reference to the band led by Bikeinechatti (also known as Red Leggings, baptized David Anderson in 1866), whose territory certainly included the lower reaches of the Black River and the mouth of the Sheenjek

(McDonald 1865-68:29 Sep and 14-21 Nov 1865, 23 Apr 1868). Kennicott had referred to that same band leader (Red Leggings or "Ba-kieh-na-chah-teh") as "the Black River chief of Kutch-a-kutch-in" (Chicago Academy of Sciences 1867-69:176).

Chandalar Kutchin (Netsi Kutchin, *Neets'ąį į Gwich'in*). The name "Chandalar" is derived from the Hudson's Bay Company's initial name for this people, Gens du Large, 'people of the wide country.'[89] Their territory centered on the drainage of the East Fork of the Chandalar River and extended east as far as the Coleen River. To the south their territory was bounded by the Yukon Flats and to the north by the Brooks Range, with an extension north of the range in the summer (West 1959; McKennan 1965:16; Slobodin 1981:515, 516, 532). In the mid 1860s they were also apparently using parts of "Siffleux" (Dihai Kutchin) territory to the west (McDonald 1865-68:18 Dec 1866).

Dihai Kutchin (*Di'hąį į Gwich'in*), called the "Siffleux" in the journals of Reverend Robert McDonald. Based on ethnohistorical evidence, Burch and Mishler (1995:165) postulate that at the end of the eighteenth century Dihai territory "included the mountainous portions of the North Fork of the Chandalar [River] and the Middle and South Forks of the Koyukuk [River]," but that the Dihai shifted their activities westward, to the headwaters of the Colville River, early in the nineteenth century. Their numbers greatly declined in conflicts with neighboring peoples, and by the early 1860s, at latest, the survivors began to merge with the Chandalar Kutchin.

Rat Indians. In Hudson's Bay Company documents, this term refers both to the Crow

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[89]All of the "Gens du..." and "Gens de..." names attached to peoples dealing with Fort Yukon may probably be attributed to the métis Antoine Hoole, the fort's official interpreter from its founding to 1868.

Flats Kutchin and to the Upper Porcupine River Kutchin. The distinction between them is often not clear from context.

Crow Flats Kutchin (Vunta Kutchin, *Vantee Gwich'in*). The inhabitants of the middle Porcupine River and its tributaries, from the Coleen River east to and including the Old Crow River drainage (Osgood 1934:173-174; Slobodin 1981:515).

Upper Porcupine River Kutchin. The inhabitants of the upper Porcupine River drainage (Osgood 1934:174).

Peel River Kutchin. The inhabitants of the Peel River drainage, excluding the lowest reaches of that river (Osgood 1934:174; Slobodin 1981:514-515).

OTHER ATHABASKANS

Gens de Millieu (*sic*), 'middle people,' called "Teeathaka" or "Tecounka-Kootchin" in Murray's published journal (1910:82); linguistic affiliation unknown, but likely Kutchin. Murray reported this group's territory to be down the Yukon from the three bands of "Kootcha-Kootchin," and thus apparently downriver of Birch Creek. In 1847-48 the group reportedly had only twenty men (Murray 1910:82). At least five of its members died over the winter of 1863-64, and twenty-two died in the scarlet fever epidemic of the winter of 1865-66 (McDonald 1861-65:28 Apr 1864; HBC 1865-69:59). This group may be the same as McDonald's Ttyoni (see below). See also discussion under Kootcha-Kootchin, above.

Ttyoni, a group named only in the journals of Reverend Robert McDonald; linguistic affiliation unknown, but likely Kutchin. Only three men, two boys, three women, and six children survived the scarlet fever epidemic of the winter of 1865-66. In June of 1866 McDonald encountered their camp two days' canoe

travel down the Yukon from Fort Yukon, but still an evening plus one hour of travel above "Ramparts" (Rampart Gorge?) or two days' travel above the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon. Two of the women were "taken to wife" by two of the "Indians from Fort Yukon" who accompanied McDonald and it was apparently one of those women who gave birth at the fort the following February (McDonald 1865-68:13 Feb and 2 Jun 1866, 7 Feb 1867). This group may be the same as the Gens de Millieu (see above).

Vunta Koochin. An Athabaskan group shown on Hardisty's map of 1853 to occupy a territory near the mouth of the Tanana River (HBC 1853:fo. 77; reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57); linguistic affiliation unknown, but likely Koyukon. They should not be confused with the Crow Flats Kutchin, known to the Hudson's Bay Company by the same name. The problem arises from the propensity of Fort Yukon's personnel to extend descriptive Kutchin designations to neighboring peoples who were not Kutchin-speakers. Thus, Vunta Kutchin, 'men of the lakes,' could equally well describe both the people of Crow Flats and the people of the lower reaches of the Tanana.

Gens de Butes, Gens du Butte, Tannin-Kootchin, Tununkutchin. A general term used by Hudson's Bay Company personnel to designate the Athabaskan peoples inhabiting the Tanana River drainage from its headwaters down at least to the mouth of the Tolovana River (McKennan 1981:562). Hardisty's map of 1853 distinguished a separate group, his "Vunta Koochin" (see above), on the lowest reaches of the river (HBC 1853:fo. 77; reproduced in McClellan 1981:37 and Ruggles 1991:57), but in other Hudson's Bay Company documents the terms "Gens de Butes," etc., seem to refer to peoples of the entire Tanana drainage.

Han, also called Han-Kootchin, Gens de Fou, and Gens du Fou in Hudson's Bay Company documents. Han-speaking Athabaskans. Their territory was the

Yukon drainage from just above the head of the Yukon Flats up to the vicinity of present-day Dawson (Osgood 1971; Crow and Obley 1981:506).

NON-ATHABASKAN PEOPLES

Aziiagmiut (*Ayaasariarmiut*), an Iñupiaq-speaking people. In Russian nineteenth-century documents they are defined as the inhabitants of Sledge Island, but their territory also included the portion of Seward Peninsula stretching from Cape Rodney to somewhat beyond Safety Sound and inland to the Kigluiak Mountains (Burch 1988:228; Ray 1983:153).

Chukchi, Chukotkans. The Chukchi live on the Asian side of Bering Strait. In the nineteenth century, their territory stretched from Cape Oliutorskii north to the Arctic coast and northwest to the headwaters of the Malyi (Little) Aniui and Bol'shoi (Big) Aniui Rivers. It included all but the northeastern and southeastern tips of the Chukchi Peninsula, which were occupied by Siberian Yup'ik-speaking peoples (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988:10; Arutiunov 1988:39-40). Both the Chukchi and the Siberian Yup'ik-speakers of the Chukchi Peninsula were involved in the so-called Chukchi trade. The general term "Chukotkans" refers to all Native inhabitants of the Chukchi Peninsula, both Chukchi and Siberian Yup'ik.

Kvikhpagmiut (*Kuigpagmiut*), the Yup'ik-speaking people inhabiting the Yukon drainage from above the Yukon delta to present-day Holy Cross (VanStone 1984:224-225; Black in Netsvetov 1984:485; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:92).

Maleimiut, Maleigmiut, Maligmiut, Naleigmiut. In nineteenth-century Russian documents, this term refers to Iñupiaq-speakers in general (Ganley 1995; Black in Netsvetov 1984:494).

Pastol'miut (*Pastulirmiut*), the Yup'ik-speaking people inhabiting the shores of Pastol Bay and the Pastolik River drainage (Burch 1988:228; Ray 1984:286 fig. 1; cf. Fienup-Riordan 1984:91-92).

Tachigmiut, the Yup'ik-speaking inhabitants of *Taciq*, the Native village adjacent to Mikhailovskii redoubt (St. Michael), and vicinity (Ray 1984:286 fig. 1, 295).

APPENDIX 2

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NULATO POST

Instructions for the Management and Operation of Nulato Odinochka[90]

General Resolutions

1) The whole country through which the Kvikhpak River flows, from the village Tutago-Igudovskoe [near mouth of Bear Creek] up to its very source, with all tributaries falling into it, that is, the rivers Iuna-ka [Koyukuk], Kuiukak [also Koyukuk], Molenozhitno [Melozitna], Minkhotliatno [Big Creek?], and others, comprises the trading sphere of the Nulato settlement. The manager tries in all significant villages to convince the Natives to choose from among themselves starshinas or toyons through whom relations with us are simplified and facilitated, [and] makes trips [both] to maintain temporary odinochkas by economical means where he considers it useful, and to conduct barter of furs, in all its magnitude, also making returns on Native products.

2) Goods, supplies and materials are received at Nulato odinochka from Redoubt St. Michael, to which it [Nulato] is subordinate in all trade accounts and management inspections.

3) The staff of Nulato odinochka is 11 men and 1 female worker, namely: 1 manager, 1 traveling starosta, 6 Russian or creole company employees, 3 Native workers, and a female Native worker.

4) For especially zealous service and good conduct the manager is permitted to recommend such people, through his supervisor, to the chief manager of the colonies every two years, with a written statement of their merits or benefits furnished to the company.

5) The manager strictly prohibits the shooting of beavers and land otters with

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[90]Translation of RCS 25/376, encl. 2:fo. 72-80v, 15 May 1845.

guns; he likewise sees to the cessation of the destructive habit of killing beavers by breaking into their houses, especially in the spring when only pregnant females remain in the houses, telling the Natives that [in] hunting beavers by such means they deprive themselves of income in the future.

Particular Resolutions

a) Management and Allowances of the Command of Nulato Odinochka

1) The manager, traveling starosta, and command, consisting of Russians and creoles, draw flour rations from the company; the manager receives 1½ rations; buying more is prohibited. Native workers should be maintained on Native provisions, but ten puds [of flour] per year is designated for them for holidays. Of other goods and supplies issued at Nulato odinochka, the whole command, without exception, draws no more than what each receives in salary; the least overrun is charged to and deducted from the pay of the odinochka manager himself.

2) Since the Natives entering company service do not yet know the value of goods or money, when they draw against their salaries an intermediary should be chosen from among the company employees. [That intermediary] also testifies to the correctness of the payments in the annual accounts. The rate of pay proposed for Native workers is so sufficient that he [the worker] can always be warmly and well clothed, draws, in keeping with his salary, European products such as tea and sugar, and can have trifles that serve as finery. But if in addition, by wise regulation of the manager, there will remain to a worker at the end of the year some unchosen [unexpended] sum, then pay it by some article of clothing as if in place of a reward so that each year the worker be paid off in full. The supplying of the Natives with rum and its transport to the odinochka for the remaining command is strictly prohibited.

3) During trips or for hunting animals and birds, it is permissible to issue firearms to the Native workers, but immediately upon completion of the trip or hunt they should be taken away.

4) All re-trading, both [of the command] among themselves and with the

Natives, is forbidden without the mediation of the manager. It is the responsibility of the manager not to have any trade transactions with the command subordinate to him.

5) For petty misdemeanors the manager of Nulato odinochka gives a dressing-down to the guilty party, but rudeness, disobedience or other such crimes subject to exemplary punishment, are entered, in front of the whole available command, into a penalty book which, together with the guilty party, is presented through the manager of [Mikhailovskii] redoubt to the commander of the [annual supply] vessel when he arrives. The manager of the odinochka is to punish corporally, not more than 20 blows, and in addition enter in the [penalty] book anyone caught red-handed stealing from the Natives. All this refers to the Russian and creole members of the command. In treatment of Natives, gentleness is necessary, and since their chief vices are laziness and carelessness, the manager is obliged to show them by personal example the virtues of labor and thrift.

6) The cultivation of root crops is a matter of great importance, both for the provisioning of the command and for the Natives, and therefore from the very first the odinochka manager sees to the establishment of gardens. Black radish, turnip, and cabbage seeds will be sent annually from Novo-Arkhangel'sk [Sitka]. But since the main subsistence of the people can with certainty be based upon the cultivation of potatoes which, being once delivered, are [subsequently] raised from the fruit itself, it is ordered that the [potato] harvests of the first two years not be used to feed the command and that it be reported annually, by crew, how much of what was sown and how much yield was obtained. *Note:* potatoes like earth that is friable, somewhat sandy, and since at the designated place at the establishment the upper soil consists of a rather thick layer of chernozem, the potato beds should be somewhat enriched with beach sand.

7) At a favorable time of year the odinochka manager sends a respectable number of marksmen to the mountains for deer [caribou]. For each skin taken into the company a marksman is paid 2 rubles; the quantity of skins obtained and receipt of beaver for them are indicated in the annual register of accounts. The following

regulations are designated for furs procured by the odinochka command: for beaver, land otter, and fox pay according to the tariff, higher than which it has been declared that the Natives are not to be paid; for wolf and wolverine, depending on the quality of the skin, pay from 3 to 6 rubles.

8) Nulato odinochka and its whole sphere belong to the parish of the church which is to be at Redoubt St. Michael or on the Kvikhpak. The priest visiting the odinochka en route to the unenlightened Natives or [in traveling] about his own parish does not require any aid either in people or in goods from the odinochka. And if a church shall be established at the odinochka, even then neither the help of the odinochka's command (unless, of course, this will not hinder its usual operations) nor goods nor products issued for trade with the Natives or to the odinochka command is [to be] used in preparation of vital necessities [for the church], or in delivery or transport of personal products or goods. While the priest is at the odinochka, all purchases for him or for church servitors, and likewise the hiring of Natives for trips, should be conducted through the odinochka manager.

9) The use of scrip at Nulato odinochka is considered unnecessary and therefore there is to be a book for recording the command's draws against their salaries. [This book], together with the annual accounts, is presented to the manager of Redoubt St. Michael for preservation in the archives in case of verifications or complaints which may arise.

10) A sum of 50 rubles in goods is designated for the insignificant gifts to Natives which may occur in frequent dealings with them, but for particular zeal, constant fidelity and benefit to the trade, Natives are brought to the attention of the chief manager of the colonies, through the manager of redoubt St. Michael, with a written statement of their merits. This refers to those who have accepted the title of Russian starshinas or toyons and who are fulfilling this position conscientiously.

11) Not having any data regarding the sums used for purchase of provisions for the command of Nulato odinochka, it is impossible to designate a definite [sum] for this purpose. Based on the abundance of the fish run in Nulato Creek [*rechku*]

and given the increase in the number of working hands at the establishment, it is desirable that this expenditure, harmful for trade, be entirely abolished, excluding unavoidable instances when provisions are purchased during travels, but even for this purpose it is determined to issue only those goods which are least in demand among the Natives, like tobacco and beads.[91] For considerations on this topic in the future, show in the annual accounts as a separate item the sum used for purchasing the command's provisions, indicating exactly which goods were issued [in exchange].

12) Nulato odinochka's expenditures in the economic sphere, such as: lavtaks [sea mammal skins] for baidarkas, thongs for sledges, twine for nets and for stretching beavers, etc., should be indicated as a separate item in the annual accounts.

13) All furs bought up by Nulato odinochka are marked with special marks on delivering them to redoubt St. Michael in order to give the Novo-Arkhangel'sk [Sitka] office the means to judge the size and worth of the skins.

14) The manager and all company employees are, through the example of [their] good conduct, to help the priest in exhorting the Natives to the truths of the Christian religion, especially talking to them about faith in the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

15) In presenting the annual accounts, the manager of Nulato odinochka gives the chief manager of the colonies a review of the condition of the year's trade, noting in it: with what tribe and villages he bartered most, what goods were most in demand, what aided or hindered an increased purchase of furs, in what goods he suffered insufficiencies and why, and other events relating directly to conduct of the odinochka's trade.

b) Operations of Nulato Odinochka

The delivery of goods and supplies to Nulato odinochka is also part of its

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[91] *Sic.* Judging from other documents of the period, beads and tobacco were items highly valued by the Natives and the company preferred not to exchange them for food.

operation, but since it is given help in this by the command of redoubt St. Michael, by the sending of cargo by water and via the Unalakleet portage, [a description of] the system and degree of this help is inserted here.

No later than 25 July a baidara or boat should be sent to Nulato. Its cargo consists especially of trade goods, both European and colonial, of which deer [reindeer] hides, lavtaks, and blubber [or, sea mammal oil] are an important part due to the need for these products in the autumn trading at Nulato. The boat returns at the end of September, as shown by five years' experience. With the first winter trail, i.e., in the first half of November, a respectable number of sledges with supplementary cargo are sent from Unalakleet.

In the course of the winter transportation of iukola [dried fish] from Unalakleet for the needs of [Mikhailovskii] redoubt, the manager [of the redoubt] sends there goods and other supplies not yet sent to Nulato, which, in his turn, the manager of Nulato can receive after sending his sledges [to Unalakleet] in March and April.

The operations of the odinochka itself should consist in a traveling party gathering furs from the inhabitants living on the upper Kvikhpak and on the river Iuna-ka or Kuiukak. The system of these operations is as follows: From the river's clearing of ice, and without completely waiting out the passing of debris, the manager, in three baidarkas of Kodiak construction, with a crew of seven men, sets out up the Kvikhpak to buy up furs, trying as much as possible to anticipate among the upriver Natives the traders living on the Kuiukak. It is impossible to define the limit of ascent along the Kvikhpak; Lieutenant Zagoskin's expedition, according to the Natives, fell two days' baidara travel short of the mouth of the stream Noggoiia [Nowitna], where a significant camp of them [Natives] gathers. Subsequent annual trips will furnish the possibility of extending explorations farther, but even on the stretch [of river] examined by the expedition, so many Natives live there in the summer that one can infer a rich purchase [of furs]. At the stream Minkhotliatno the party can halt and stock up on the fresh fish coming into this stream in great number. A raft provides for floating the purchased furs [back down the river]. The party,

returning by 1 or 10 July, i.e., by the time khaiko [dog or chum salmon] appear, will, together with the rest of the command, engage in putting up iukola; from 10 or 15 August the manager a second time sends a party to the river Kuiukak for the same kind of purchasing from the Natives living along it. Its [the party's] operation ends by 10 September, i.e., by the [time of the] transport of new cargo [to the odinochka] from redoubt St. Michael. Living on the spot, the manager of the redoubt [odinochka?] will acquaint himself with the times most advantageous for taking blubber and reindeer hides to the Natives living on the lower Kuiukak, and also will not neglect to send a party there. An active and personal eye will teach where [to go] and what goods to take along for trade.

c) General Rules [for Dealing] with the Natives

Set tariffs [price schedules] are not proposed for payment for the furs bought by Nulato odinochka; in receiving furs at first and second hand and trading chiefly for beads, goods of low monetary value, the payment itself should be incomparably lower than the prices established for redoubt St. Michael. For all that, in order to deflect the whole trade of the Natives from the Maleimiuts to the benefit of the Russian-American Company, the whole year's amount paid out for furs bought by the odinochka, in total, is allowed to equal the amount designated by the tariff.

For constant trade with the Natives it is determined:

1) To try to maintain in value all iron implements, especially kettles, spears and knives, likewise beads and dentalium shells, and not to lower prices of Native products such as reindeer hides, snares, lavtaks, and blubber, observing, however, moderation in everything, i.e.. that these products always be at a somewhat lower price as compared to that at which they are figured among the Natives.

2) For all furs coming to the odinochka, it is permissible to pay at the [full] prices defined in the tariff in ticking, calico, chintz, kerchiefs, and in general all clothing goods. For blankets, no matter what sort, take no more than 10 and not less than 6 beavers.

Staff

Salary Rate of the Command of Nulato Odinochka

No.	Title	Annual Salary [r.]	Table Allowance [r.]
1	Manager	400 to 500	100
1	Traveling starosta	350	75
6	Russian or creole workers	250 to 350	
3	Native workers	120	
1	Female worker	120	
		3,430 [max.]	175
			in all, 3,605 rubles

APPENDIX 3

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL, 1820 TO 1868

Colonial Chief Managers

15 September 1820 to 22 October 1825[92] Matvei Ivanovich Murav'ev

22 October 1825 to 5 October 1830 Petr Egorovich Chistiakov

5 October 1830 to 29 October 1835 Ferdinand Petrovich Wrangell

29 October 1835 to 1 June 1840 Ivan Antonovich Kupreianov

1 June 1840 to 6 July 1845 Arvid Adolf Etholen (Adolf Karlovich Etolin)

6 July 1845 to 14 October 1850 Mikhail Dmitrievich Teben'kov

14 October 1850 to 31 March 1853 Nikolai Iakovlevich Rozenberg

31 March 1853 to 22 April 1854 Aleksandr Il'ich Rudakov

22 April 1854 to 22 June 1859 Stepan Vasil'evich Voevodskii

22 June 1859 to 17 May 1864 Johan Hampus Furuhjelm (Ivan Vasil'evich Furugel'm)

17 May 1864 to 18 October 1867 Dmitrii Petrovich Maksutov

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[92]In some cases, the dates cited here differ from those found in other published lists of the colonial chief managers. They are extracted from the Records of the Russian-American Company, Correspondence of the Governors General, Communications Sent, and correspond to the date on which each chief manager officially yielded his position to his successor.

Mikhailovskii Redoubt

1833-38[93] manager Ivan Kuz'min (or Koz'min), peasant of Yaroslavl' province (RCS 10/236:fo. 135v, 19 May 1833, 17/339:fo. 340v, 27 May 1839)

1838-42 manager Vasilii Donskoi, Petrozavodsk burgher (RCS 16/302:fo. 29v, 10 May 1838, 21/167:fo. 108, 29 Apr 1842)[94]

1842-44 manager Karl Nordstrem, Finlander from Abo (present-day Turku) (RCS 21/167:fo. 108, 29 Apr 1842, 23/157:fo. 130, 25 Apr 1844)

1843-? clerk Efim Kuziakin, creole (RCS 22/210:fo. 160v, 27 Apr 1843)

1844-48 manager Petr Epifanov, Novgorod burgher (RCS 23/157:fo. 130, 25 Apr 1844, 29/326:fo. 344, 22 May 1848)

1845-50 assistant manager Iakov Niugren, Finlander (RCS 24/266:fo. 312v, 14 May 1845, 31/35:fo. 21, 13 Mar 1850)[95]

1848-50 manager Andrei Gusev, Tver burgher (RCS 29/326:fo. 344, 22 May 1848, 31/346:fo. 223v-224, 31 May 1850)

assistant manager Iakov Niugren (see above)

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[93]The normal service year at Mikhailovskii ran from ca. late July to late July, to correspond with the arrival of the supply ship. At the subordinate odinochkas, there was no set service year, for managers were replaced as deemed necessary.

[94]In the 1840-41 service year Donskoi was instructed to assume the position of assistant manager under Karl Nordstrem so that he would be free to do other important work. It is not clear from the record whether that transfer took place. Donskoi was reconfirmed as Mikhailovskii manager in 1841 (RCS 20/168:f. 187v, 1 May 1841).

[95]Niugren retained the position of assistant manager in the service year 1850-51, but was in Sitka seeking medical attention (RCS 32/66:f. 38, 20 Mar 1851).

1850-51 temporary manager Timofei Chadrantsov, Vologda peasant (RCS 31/35, 346:fo. 21, 223v-224, 13 Mar and 31 May 1850, 32/665:fo. 515, 5 Oct 1851, 33/59:fo. 24, 15 Feb 1852)

1851-54 manager Iakov Niugren, Finlander (RCS 33/59:fo. 24, 15 Feb 1852, 35/231:fo. 99v, 17 Jun 1854)

1852-53 clerk Petr Lemisov, Tiumen' peasant (RCS 33/558:fo. 388v, 16 Jun 1852; ARCA 1853:fr. 799)

1854-58 manager Ignatii Andreianov, Yaroslavl' peasant. Died in office (RCS 35/230:fo. 95v, 17 Jun 1854; ARCA 1858:fr. 166)

1856-62 clerk and assistant manager Ivan Panshin, creole (RCS 37/328:fo. 126, 30 May 1856, 44/268:fo. 78, 13 May 1862)[96]

1858-59 acting manager Andrei Arkhimandritov, creole (ARCA 1858:fr. 206, 1859:fr. 256; RCS 42/19:fo. 5, 26 Jan 1860)

clerk and assistant manager Ivan Panshin (see above)

1859-63 manager Maksim Vakhrameev, St. Petersburg (Tsarskoe selo) teamster (RCS 39/449:fo. 168, 31 Dec 1858, 45/265:fo. 65, 18 May 1863)

clerk and assistant manager Ivan Panshin (see above)

1863-68 manager Sergei Stepanov (Rusanov), Moscow burgher (RCS 45/263:fo. 60v, 18 May 1863)[97]

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[96]Panshin served primarily as the area doctor, but had additional duties as clerk and assistant manager. He remained at Mikhailovskii until 1866 and may have continued to assist the manager up to that time.

[97]Church records refer to this manager variously as Stepanov-Rusanov, Stepanov, and Rusanov.

Unalakleet Odinochka (chronology incomplete)

1851-59 baidarshchik Grigorii Ivanov, Arkhangel'sk peasant (RCS 32/569:fo. 417v, 7 Jun 1851; ARCA 1859:fr. 210)[98]

1859-62 baidarshchik Andrei Alekseev (Solov'ev), Novgorod peasant (RCS 43/41:fo. 21v, 15 Mar 1861, 45/265:fo. 63, 18 May 1863)

1862-65 baidarshchik Andreian Tel'nov (or Telenov), Yaroslavl' peasant (RCS 45/265:fo. 64, 18 May 1863, 47/128:fo. 43v, 6 May 1865)

1865-68? baidarshchik Andrei Solov'ev, Novgorod peasant (RCS 47/128:fo. 43v, 6 May 1865)

Ikogmiut and Andreevskaia Odinochkas

1835-38 baidarshchik Vasilii Donskoi, Petrozavodsk burgher (RCS 12/328:fo. 314v-315, 5 Oct 1835, 17/339:fo. 340v, 27 May 1839)

1838-39 baidarshchik Petr Brusenin, creole. Killed in Native attack on the post in 1839 (RCS 18/292:fo. 283v-284, 14 May 1840)

1841-44 baidarshchik Andrei Glazunov, creole. Falsely accused of "bad deeds" by Mikhailovskii manager Nordstrem and sent out to Sitka (RCS 20/304:fo. 313, 21 May 1841, 23/478:fo. 387v, 13 May 1844)

1844-45 baidarshchik Ivan Serebrennikov, creole (RCS 24/304:fo. 357v, 15 May 1845)

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[98]Ivanov was at Unalakleet as early as 1846. His management may have begun then. He was scheduled to leave for Sitka in 1851, but had married a local Native woman the previous year and decided to continue in northern service (RCS 32/25:f. 15v, 20 Jan 1851, 33/561:f. 389v-390, 16 Jun 1852; cf. Netsvetov 1984:260).

1845-46 baidarshchik Andrei Glazunov, creole. Died in office (RCS 24/304:fo. 356, 15 May 1845; ARCA 1846:fr. 743; Netsvetov 1984:15)

1845-? assistant Nikolai Shmakov, creole (RCS 24/304:fo. 357v, 15 May 1845)

Movement of operations downriver to Andreevskaia, 1845/46

1846 baidarshchik Ivan Serebrennikov, creole (RCS 26/225:fo. 132v, 4 May 1846)

1846-51 baidarshchik Ivan Zakharov, creole (RCS 28/414:fo. 102, 21 May 1847, 32/543:fo. 401-402v, 7 Jun 1851)

1850-51 assistant baidarshchik Ivan Serebrennikov, creole (RCS 32/543:fo. 401-402v, 7 Jun 1851)

1851-55 baidarshchik Aleksandr Shcherbakov, Belev burgher. Killed in Native attack on the post in November 1855 (RCS 32/543:fo. 401-402v, 7 Jun 1851, 37/233:fo. 95, 3 May 1856)

1855 (March-November) traveling starosta Ivan Kozhevnikov, Tiumen' peasant (RCS 37/315:fo. 123, 30 May 1856, 37/233:fo. 95v, 3 May 1856)

1856-61 baidarshchik Ivan Kozhevnikov, Tiumen' peasant (RCS 37/322:fo. 125, 30 May 1856, 43/327:fo. 98, 20 Jun 1861, 44/210:fo. 64, 4 May 1862)

1857-62? traveling starosta Grigorii Ivanov, Tiumen' peasant (RCS 38/264:fo. 77v, 24 May 1857; ARCA 1862:fr. 368)

1862-68? baidarshchik Nikolai Milovanov, Saratov merchant's son (RCS 44/210:fo. 64, 4 May 1862)

Nulato Odinochka

winter 1839/40 baidarshchik Vasilii Deriabin, Arkhangel'sk peasant (RCS 18/335:fo. 314v, 25 May 1840)

1841-45 baidarshchik Vasilii Deriabin, Arkhangel'sk peasant (RCS 20/304:fo. 313, 21 May 1841, 26/225:fo. 137v-138, 4 May 1846)

1845-46 baidarshchik Ivan Zakharov, creole (RCS 24/304:fo. 355v, 15 May 1845, 27/325:fo. 463, 12 May 1847)

1846-51 (February) baidarshchik Vasilii Deriabin, Arkhangel'sk peasant. Killed in Native attack on the post in February 1851 (RCS 26/225:fo. 137v-138, 4 May 1846, 32/632:fo. 470, 19 Aug 1851)

1848/9-51 clerk Aleksandr Shcherbakov, Belev burgher (RCS 30/282:fo. 187v-188, 14 May 1849, 32/543:fo. 401-402v, 7 Jun 1851)

1851 temporary baidarshchik Grigorii Nikitin, Tungus (Evenk) (RCS 32/632:fo. 471, 19 Aug 1851, 33/768:fo. 536, 23 Nov 1852)

mid 1851-52 baidarshchik Ivan Serebrennikov, creole. Removed from office for mistreatment of Natives (RCS 33/59, 768:fo. 24, 536, 15 Feb and 23 Nov 1852)

1851-53 assistant baidarshchik Aleksandr Ivanov, Riazan' peasant (RCS 33/554:fo. 386v, 16 Jun 1852, 36/35:fo. 30, 1 Mar 1855; ARCA 1853:fr. 799)

mid 1852-54? baidarshchik Semeon Parfent'ev (Parshin), Kostroma peasant (RCS 33/768:fo. 535v, 23 Nov 1852)

assistant baidarshchik Aleksandr Ivanov (see above)

1854?-59 baidarshchik Grigorii Nikitin, Tungus (Evenk) (ARCA 1854:fr. 4; RCS 37/336:fo. 128, 30 May 1856, 40/284:fo. 102v, 9 Jun 1859)

1859-60 baidarshchik Nikandr Makurin, Nizhnii Novgorod peasant. Removed from office for unauthorized trade (RCS 40/284:fo. 102v, 9 Jun 1859, 43/41:fo. 23, 15 Mar 1861)

1860-62 baidarshchik Koz'ma Stroganov, Moscow peasant (RCS 43/41:fo. 22v-23, 15 Mar 1861, 44/210:fo. 63v, 4 May 1862)

1862-65 baidarshchik Pavel Mikriukov, Kazan' burgher. Died in office (RCS 44/210:fo. 63v, 4 May 1862; ARCA 1866b:fr. 539)

1863-65 traveling starosta Ivan Pavlov, creole (RCS 45/265:fo. 64, 18 May 1863)

1865-68 (acting?) baidarshchik Ivan Pavlov, creole (Dall 1870:44)

APPENDIX 4

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL AND INTERPRETERS AT FORT YUKON, 1847 TO 1869

1847-51 Alexander Hunter Murray, clerk

1847-50 Alexander McKenzie, assistant postmaster

1850-51 William L. Hardisty, assistant

1847-68 Antoine Hoole, interpreter

1851-59 William L. Hardisty, clerk; promoted to chief trader 1857

1853-54? C. P. Gaudet, postmaster

1857-58 James V. Dunlap (or Dunlop), apprentice clerk. Transferred due to friction with local Natives.

Antoine Hoole, interpreter (see above)

1859-62 James Lockhart, clerk

1859-62 Strachan Jones, apprentice clerk

1859-61 William Brass, postmaster

Antoine Hoole, interpreter (see above)

1862-65 Strachan Jones, apprentice clerk; promoted to clerk 1863

1863?-65 James McDougall, apprentice clerk

Antoine Hoole, interpreter (see above)

1865-69 James McDougall, apprentice clerk; promoted to clerk 1866

1865-67 R. G. S. Cowley, apprentice clerk. Drowned 18 June 1867.

1868-69 N. James Sinclair, postmaster

Antoine Hoole, interpreter (see above). Died 22 October 1868.

1868-69 William Flett, interpreter

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1839-51 Yukon-Kuskokwim, Nulato, Cases: Malakhov, Petr, Ovchinnikov, Lavrentii (Homicide), 1839-1851. Microfilm reel 171, frames 245-285. Microfilmed by Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Mf 139 in collections of Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.)

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1864b St. Michael-Ikogmiut-Kolmakov Parish Records, Church/Clergy Registers, Ikogmiut Holy Cross Church, 1864. Microfilm reel 158, frames 372-392. Microfilmed by Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Mf 139 in collections of Alaska and Polar Regions Dept., Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.)

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